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Identity Formations in an Ethic of Caring: Teaching of Post Secondary Studio Art Courses

by

©

Phillip W. Mann

A Dissertation
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Secondary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 1993

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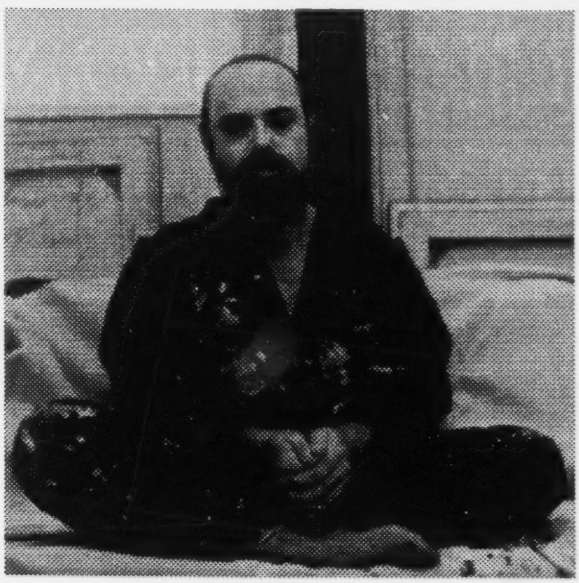
Dated: August 25/93

I AM ~ME~

I am not a body
But
I have a body
I am not a mind
But
I have a mind
I am not emotions
But
I have emotions
I am not a spirit
But
I have spirituality
I am not the Other
But
I can be the Other
There is the Other
And in an understanding of the Other
I become the Other to the Other's I
The body shapes me
The mind shapes me
The emotions shape me
The spirit shapes me
The interpretations of experience shape me
The Other shapes me and I shape the Other
I am body, mind, emotion, spirit, experience, interpretation and the Other
But
I am much more than the sum of these things

I am ~Me~



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Identity Formations in an Ethic of Caring: Teaching of Post Secondary Studio Art Courses submitted by Phillip W. Mann in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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May 5, 1993

Dedication

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of many beings. Jan was always there with constructive help for me. My committee was always supportive. I would like to add a special note to Bob for his support and his help with my Buddhist explorations. Senge, my Buddhist teacher, gave me many insights into the nature of being a compassionate being. My friends, especially Dick and Ruby, but all my friends and family gave me constants support. Thanks also goes to the office staff for their help and encouragement. Most of all, this dissertation would not have been possible without each and everyone of the students I have had the pleasure of instructing over the years. This dissertation is dedicated to them and I hope that it reflects the needs and desires they have for their educational experience. Thank you.

Abstract

This is a dissertation which explores the difficulties encountered in attempting to be a compassionate teacher in the post secondary school system. It necessarily then addresses the meaning of being a compassionate teacher while exploring and revealing the tensionalities which occur because of the systems overwhelming concern for the technical and practical aspects of education. I have used myself and my personal experiences as an art teacher as the instrument of exploration and have therefore chosen to write this dissertation in a narrative style.

The first step in this exploration was to set the tone of the exploration through the use of a story which highlighted a negative example of an educational experience. The dissertation moves from this story to an explanation of how the question was arrived at.

Once the question has been defined it was necessary to explain why narrative style was the most appropriate method for me to use to write the dissertation. Arguments were given to fortify the use of my personal experiences as the grounding for the dissertation.

Once establisheing narrative as the chosen method of research a brief discussion on this process followed. This discussion centers on concepts of identity and ethics.

In this discussion of the current literature about ethics is distinguished from morality and Western views of the Self are contrasted with Eastern views as represented in Buddhist beliefs.

Narratives of my own teaching were integrated through these notions of ethics and identity demonstrating how they have influenced my teaching. From this exploration of pedagogy there arose a group of themes

concerning the educational experience. To verify these themes and to corroborate my interpretations of the meaning and importance of compassionate teaching, I gave the dissertation to my students to read and have recorded in an interpretive manner their responses to the dissertation.

Chapter eight reviews what has been postulated in the rest of the dissertation, but it is by no means a conclusion. The whole premise of this dissertation is that change is inevitable. This change can be left to "just happen" or it can be guided by reflective thought and critical and open interpretation of events which includes a validation of the Others point of view.

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CHAPTER ONE:

COMING TO THE QUESTION

A PERSONAL NARRATIVE.

It was our first day of class and our first day as junior high school students. Everyone was understandably nervous and excited, meeting new friends and renewing old friendships. We were keenly aware of our new position in the school hierarchy. In elementary school we had just enjoyed a year of high prestige because we were the eldest, the grade sixers. Yet this importance paled in comparison to our new status; we were now junior high rather than elementary students. Paradoxically, this move to junior high school, which raised our sense of prestige among the elementary students, put us in a position of inferiority at our new school. As freshman, grade sevens were the lowest of the low in junior high, the butt of jokes and the scorn of the eighth and ninth graders. Consequently that first day was a day of happiness, sadness, confusion, fear and excitement; the result of our mixed emotions was that we were unruly, noisy and hard to control.

Our new homeroom teacher repeatedly tried to quiet us down as she attempted to explain new procedures. Many things would be different and it was important for us to understand the new rules. We however, were too excited and afraid to remain quiet for long and out bursts of noisy and unruly behavior were common. Finally, our homeroom teacher lashed out in frustration. She focused on a student in class whom she already knew, someone who had failed grade seven. In

front of the entire class she began to belittle and abuse him. His failure was a result of the kind of behavior we were exhibiting and we were all going to end up like him, losers, if we continued to act up. She went on to let him and us know how stupid he was, how doubtful it was that he would ever amount to anything and what a waste of her time it was trying to teach him.

The effects of the teacher's statements upon him were visually apparent. He physically withdrew, attempting to shrink into his desk, to become invisible. His face turned red and he had tears in his eyes. Not only had he been reminded of his failure, but everyone now knew of it and of his inadequacies. He was branded as the guy who had failed grade seven. The teacher had touched upon our biggest fear, the fear that we would be unable to do well in the more demanding atmosphere of junior high that we would not be up to the challenge. In that moment, this teacher had constructed for the rest of us an image of an inadequate and worthless person, the person we all feared we might be. But she had also done so much more.

The boy eventually dropped out, disappeared, thus fulfilling her expectations of him. He was soon forgotten and never missed.

As a result of this event, we began life as junior high students in an atmosphere of fear and confrontation. Over the course of that first year the teacher's abusive behavior continued, and spread to all of us. We rebelled and set out to break her as a teacher to destroy her sense of worth. Eventually we drove her from the class in tears and bragged to the other classes of our success. We were the first class to have achieved this goal, but not the first to have tried. However, though we had driven her from class, we had not defeated her. She returned to us

not informed by the experience, but more hostile than before. She spent the year attempting to reassert her authority through ridicule and derision and we continued to try to undermine it. Homeroom became a battleground for control. Our major concern for that year was not learning, but rescuing ourselves from her ridicule and punishing her for the hurts that she inflicted upon us. Her major concern seemed to be establishing her place of power through verbal abuse and intimidation. Moreover, she was not alone in her attitude. Many teachers were as abusive and as intimidating as she, our class, had gained a reputation for inappropriate behavior. The teachers were fore-warned and fore-armed.

This situation set the tone for the rest of junior high and much of senior high school. I learned that first year how to do battle with the teacher as the Other, not how to compromise through a dialogue of shared feelings, desires and goals. I was shown that the educational could be a battlefield, with the teachers as the enemy. Students who excelled or who were liked by the teachers became traitors. I achieved only what I needed to achieve to get away from teachers I hated. Even though I encountered some excellent and very patient teachers, I was unwilling to trust them. The fear and anger that teachers like her instilled in me negated my capacity for fair judgment. I felt forced into a camp dedicated to opposing her and all other teachers, for protection and survival became a more crucial issue than learning.

So much was lost for me. The joy and the excitement of learning were gone. School was not a place I wanted to be but a place I had to be. I never experienced that bond with a special teacher who ignited within me a passion for some specific subject.

Few of the people in that class went on to post secondary education; most entered the work force right after high school graduation; they did not further their education. The fate of the young man who dropped out is unknown but statistically his chances look grim. The lesson learned by him and by me was that power begot privilege: abuse and coercion were tools used to force those of lower status to behave as you wished. I also learned that to survive, I often had to pretend to adopt the views of my teachers and behave the ways that they demanded even though I did not really accept these views and behaviors as correct. School became a mixture of conflict and false pretense.

Looking back at this incident with the wisdom of time and experience, I can now interpret this situation as one based in the serious conflict between the Self of the teacher and that of the Others', or the students. It demonstrates what can occur when the formal educational process becomes a struggle for power and control, rather than an experience which fosters in both teachers and students, a mutual desire to learn and to grow. Rather than creating an atmosphere of mutual caring in which ideas can be debated and openly questioned, such power conflicts detract from and can destroy, the entire learning process. The teacher involved did not act out of love and seemed unaware of the consequences of her actions. Her personal sense of ethics was not based on compassion or caring and thus her actions did nothing to nurture this young man or the rest of us. I am sure that for her, her motivations were directed at instilling the discipline necessary to success in school and in life. Unfortunately she was oblivious to actual consequences of her actions. In a sense, it was her lack of love that blinded her to the realities of her classroom and her behavior. The shape of education under such conditions of conflict between students and teachers,

can take one of two forms, either a series of conflicts or a passive regurgitating of ideas. This is conflict is played out repeatedly in our society, not just in schools but within every facet of our social structure. The view that the Other is somehow to be feared and therefore dominated and repressed, has been and is still at the root of many of the social problems encountered in modern society. My memory of this incident and others in my life as a student and a teacher have lead me to new interpretations of these incidents. Combining my memories and interpretations with the memories and interpretations of my students' experiences in my class and their experiences in other classes has informed and has brought me to the question of what of inquiring into the meaning of being a teacher.

A personal journey

As often happens in life it was a crisis that focused my attention on the question of ethics and ethical behavior. While working in the visual arts area of a college in the city where I live, teaching drawing, I found myself quite unconsciously beginning to break down the barriers that exist in most institutions between student and teacher. I realized that in order for my students to live up to their abilities, I had to be aware and responsive to the various needs of their multiple selves. I was also becoming aware of the apparent fact that each student learned differently and at different rates, and that some of my teaching practices were harmful in ways I had not foreseen. I was also becoming aware of my own needs. Teaching had to be pleasurable. It also had to be rewarding; I needed to be able to see that I had helped my students to achieve their goals. I understood that I had a love for my students and that maybe it was all right for them to know that I

cared for each of them. I realized that one of my needs as a person was to be able to use my talents and knowledge to contribute something positive and helpful to my students education and to their life. This is not to say that I was already on my way to an awareness of the ethical dilemmas involved in teaching and in living, only that questions were arising in my mind that I had not heretofore asked.

Nevertheless, I found that questioning was the first step towards awareness, and without awareness change could be chaotic and uncontrollable. As I became more aware of the ethical issues at stake in the classroom, I realized that the needs of my students were more than academic (the need to learn certain skills and concepts). These other needs directly affected their ability to achieve academically. As a consequence of this realization, I began to experiment with ways in which to address these needs. My focus was on building a personal relationship with each student and getting to know them as individuals, offering advice when asked, discussing possibilities for future action, and generally being more than just a teacher to them.

During this time when I began to become aware of my students' needs, I was working for two women who held directly opposite views to mine concerning power and student relations. They had an agenda that was not to be challenged in any way, and reacted toward the students in a confrontational manner much like my grade seven teacher. They also did not want the students receiving any artistic concepts or philosophies that differed from theirs. (I was banned from their teaching areas.) My presence just like my ideas, would undermine their teaching. Further, students were not allowed to express opinions other than those of the two instructors, and students' grades were based as

much upon whether the students work expressed the views of these two instructors as they were upon the visual resolution of the work. Male students who rebelled against this coercive situation were labeled "chauvinists" and "trouble makers" while females who rebelled were labeled as "having a problem" and sent of to see councilors.

Students seemed to trust me and they often preferred to come to me for advice rather than to go to other instructors. The two instructors in question were highly offended by this, and told me that I was no longer allowed to advise students; I was also reminded that I was hired to teach only drawing, and I was warned not to say too much about that. I was definitely not to talk about painting or artistic philosophies. I was also told by some co-workers that I did too much for my students because I was willing to come in on weekends and stay late to help them. In particular, I had been told by one co-worker that because I expressed an interest in how well my students were doing in other classes I was interfering with the performance of other instructors' teaching, and that my close relationship with my students was unprofessional. Additionally, I was told that my students' portfolios made all the other staff work harder.

During my fourth year at the college, the entire program, including the instructors were to be evaluated. My immediate supervisor, one of these women, evaluated me using such terms as "good" and "excellent" and I was described as "an asset" to the department. The students evaluated each instructor as well. My evaluation was very favorable. By contrast, the other instructors received much lower evaluations; these two instructors received the lowest evaluations of all. After the results of this evaluation were

released, I noticed a distinct coolness in their behavior to me. Late in the summer of that year I was informed that I was no longer wanted in that department. I was told that I was a detriment to the program and undermined its credibility.

A First Reflection on the Narrative

The conflict seemed to me to arise out of two main concerns. The first and, from my point of view, the most serious was that these two instructors would not entertain any positive sense of the Other. That is to say that, they did not view the students as having value other than that the program needed a certain number to meet its quota. They felt no need to address the students from any other point of view than that of an impersonal academic stance. They were often verbally abusive to their students and they used subtle psychological tactics to undermine students' self esteem such as sending them to councilors. This of course implied that the students had some psychological problems. They demonstrated a complete lack of caring for the students' well-being. The desire for power and control coupled with the need to promote certain artistic and political agendas blinded them to the consequences of their actions.

Within months of my termination I was hired by another visual area in the same college. I have since been encouraged to develop and maintain a strong relationship with my students. I have been invited into other instructors' classrooms to get a first hand view of what my students were doing outside my class. I have been encouraged and praised for working with my students after regular class hours. My supervisor has thanked me

for showing such care for my students and has told them and me he admires my relationship with my students.

When I was fired by these two instructors, I had gone into a state of shock and anger. My desire to be the best teacher I could be had resulted in my being fired. By attempting to provide for my students in a holistic manner I had apparently alienated some of my co-workers. Through attempting to understand the problems my students might be having in other classes I thought I could better understand the problems they might be having in my class. As well, I might be able to offer them alternatives that their own instructor or I had missed. To be fair to myself I have always encouraged my students to seek out other staff members for advice and help especially if I was having trouble finding appropriate alternatives for them.

Tied into this was my desire to do the most for my students by staying late, etc. The sense of caring and respect that I gave to my students of course biased them towards me and made them feel a sense of safety and trust in my classroom. For this I offer no apology. In my turn, I perhaps reacted to them in ways partly determined by my own previous experiences as a student in just such a power struggle. What I failed to do was to be aware of the needs of my colleagues. I neglected to see the way in which they viewed my actions. They were not seeing my actions as benefiting the students so much as they saw them as casting a negative interpretation on their teaching styles. I should have been more attentive to reassuring them that I was not in any way undermining their status as teachers. I did not give to these colleagues the love and compassion that I was giving to my students.

Nonetheless, I could not sanction the way they treated students and it is still not clear to me how I might have avoided the situation while

maintaining my integrity. I began to realize, that ethical behavior in such situations was far more complex than I had first thought. Not only was it necessary to be constantly examining my own motives but also I had to be keenly aware of the needs and motives of my colleagues, and the possible interpretations my actions might be given by the others involved. It became apparent to me that not only might I not be fully cognizant of my motives, but others might be interpreting my actions far differently than I had intended; moreover I might be interpreting the consequences of my actions from a preconceived view. I also might be interpreting their actions very differently from what they had intended. I had to walk as the other as well as my self.

When I began to reflect upon such matters I realized that this process of awareness and change was very much like the process of creating a painting or a series of paintings. When students set out to paint a picture with illusionist qualities, they often see a sense of illusion where none exists. That is, they see their intentions rather than what is occurring. They interpret their picture from the stance of desire, and are blinded by this desire from seeing what is actually occurring. It is only when others reinterpret the picture for them that they begin to see more clearly what they have done or not done. As a painter I understood this, as an art teacher I understood this but as a teacher in the broader sense of the term I had only questions. How could I interpret and evaluate my ethical beliefs, the actions resulting from those beliefs, and the consequences of those actions? From what perspective point should I stand?

The question of being a Teacher

When I looked at this question, I realized that what this question was asking was, what does it mean to be a compassionate, caring teacher? What are the ethical considerations and how does reflectivity enter into the discussion? What then does the relationship between the student and the teacher look like and how is it formed? Is this a stationary or a fluid relationship? How is it that the being of a teacher is formed and reformed through the act of teaching? I use the word being rather than occupation because teaching is to me a way of life. It extends beyond the classroom. Being a teacher is like being a painter, it describes the meaning of your existence not what you do. It is this definition of teaching that precipitates some of the following questions. What mediates the decision making processes and how are the consequences of these decisions understood through a multiplicity of subject positions? Further, how does ethics enter into and shape this process?

Ethics is of central importance to this question of the being of a teacher. The ramifications of the interplay between the teacher and the students carry on far beyond the learning of skills. How I, as a teacher, relate to my students on a body level, (a personal level) imparts far more information than just artistic ideas and skills. Issues of power relationships, social responsibility, and human interaction are continuously played out in the classroom arena. Students learn what and who to value through their interactions with their parents, peers and in an ever increasing role, with their teachers. How the world of the future is shaped will, to a large extent, be determined by the types of classroom cultures students are exposed to because to a greater or lesser extent, the classroom becomes a microcosm

of society. Therefore it is important that those involved in the teaching experience be aware of what they are constructing rather than what they believe they are constructing in the classroom. It is also very necessary that this awareness reveal the actual intent of the events occurring, which involves an understanding of the conscious and unconscious motivations of all those involved. It requires critical reflection on intent, action, and consequences occurring in the past, present, and future and an understanding of the interdependence of all the elements participating in that event or sequence of events. It requires personal desire be put aside and replaced with a genuine interest. What I mean here is that when something is desired, this desire is a wish to own something, to objectify it. Genuine interest refers to a curiosity based upon certain ideals. With genuine interest, a person looks at what is occurring in an unpreconceived way in order to understand what is happening. Then this comprehension is given meaning and value by comparing it to an ideal or a set of ideals. This notion will be developed further later in the dissertation.

Reflection and Language

The crisis that brought me to question the meaning of being a teacher did not immediately bring me to an understanding of how to answer the question. In fact at first I did not focus at all on the actual question. I had been wounded and I wished for a way to protect myself. More than this, my integrity had been questioned and this had radically undermined the value I placed on my being. I really began to doubt my own abilities as a teacher. Therefore, when I began to research the meaning of being a teacher, the question I asked was: "How could I be a better teacher?" The focus was still

on me. What did I need to do and to be? In an action research project conducted with a fellow Ph. D. student Roshan. Roshan who was from Nepal and had experienced a more authoritarian educational system. The action research de-centered myself and re-focused attention upon the students. I realized that, hitherto, I had some notion of my needs both as an academic and a person, but I had been unaware of the non-academic needs of the students.

Very early into our research we realized that the critical question for me was not, "What must I do to be a better teacher?", but rather, "What was it like to be a student in a large post secondary institution and what was missing from that experience? It quickly became apparent that while getting a good education was important to these students; other issues of emotion, body and spirit were of more consequence to them. I began to understand that to be a better teacher was to be focused upon the students and not upon my self. In the spirit of this notion of the students' voices being heard this dissertation provides the students' voices in the following chapter and again more directly in chapter seven. In both instances the students have been interviewed and in keeping with the notions of narrative and interpretation their remarks have been interpreted by me with their permission.

To help the students I had to understand them and their needs. I also had to be aware of the ways in which they interpreted my actions. Good intentions are not enough if these intentions are misunderstood. To facilitate our understanding of the students' perceptions of each other and myself , Roshan became a part of the class, taking part in the projects and becoming friendly with the students. In this role he was able to conduct both formal interviews and informal conversations with the students from a position of

familiarity. They did know the purpose of his introduction into the class but they soon seemed to accept him as a member. When he missed class, they became very concerned for him, because they knew his wife was having a baby, just as they would have become concerned for any fellow classmate.

Roshan, was used to a system in which students were strictly disciplined and where school life was regimented, desk in straight lines and so on. During the action research project Roshan kept a comprehensive journal. The following points have been condensed from his journals and notes made during the project.

- Students felt that the extent of freedom that they enjoyed in this art class should be extended to other classes because this type of informal setting allowed them to learn effectively in a stress free atmosphere. The stress and tension of exams or assignments associated with other classes was eliminated and yet they were all were involved in creative learning activities. The striking difference between this class and other classes was that despite the structure and effective organization in other classes, what was being taught was not necessarily what was being learned. The work in their other classes focused primarily on memorization rather than conceptualizing, and according to the students the information memorized rarely stayed in their memories for long. The main reason for memorization was to pass examinations and get good grades.

- In a highly formal classroom situation, students would seldom get a chance to get to know each other. In contrast, because of the unique and informal approach of the instructor and his great sense of humor, students got know each other quickly. The students expressed a

strong need for community and comradeship. They did not like to feel that they were alone in the struggle.

- There was a great deal of emphasis on cooperative learning. Students were encouraged to critically comment on each others' work. Because of the friendly atmosphere in the classroom there was no sense of apprehension and fear to interact. Students expressed a need to feel safe to take risks and try new things without the fear of ridicule.

- Students liked the instructor's way of involving them in the activities. Many opportunities would be provided to improve learning. Nowhere in this process did the teacher demand any kind of rigid product. The main emphasis was on consciously learning and being honest with oneself. In this situation, there was a growing sense of trust between the students and the teacher.

One of our main objectives was to gauge how committed students were to the class and to learning. Here is what Roshan was told by the students.

- Although it appeared that some students were putting off their work, it would be difficult for someone to assess how many of these seemingly uncaring students spent time in the studio during weekends and late nights. Art, according to one student, is a field that is related to one's feeling. A person really has to be in the right mood to paint. Therefore, some might find it worth while to paint at their own convenience. Students felt that where, when, and what is learned are interconnected and Phill is the kind of teacher who always seems willing to help his students irrespective of time or place or when possible of subject matter (academic or otherwise).

After reflecting on these and other comments made by the students, Roshan and I realized that it was not the technical aspects of the presentation of the projects or which projects I chose that were important to the students. Rather, it was the sense of community that was critical, the sense that every class was a collaborative effort to learn and our goal as a class was to become better artists. It was not our goal to compete or try to out do each other. Students valued the fact they had been able to develop friendships with their classmates and with me and they valued these friendships. They valued the sense of trust and safety in the classroom. They viewed me as a helper, as a facilitator, and not as someone who merely transferred knowledge and grades them on their ability to play back what I have taught them. They also valued deeply the chance to express their own feelings and desires and they wanted and needed spaces to develop their own sensibilities and interests. They needed to feel that others took them seriously. Students wanted their uniqueness recognized. They wanted to be able to say ~I am Me~.

What became apparent was that if the students are indeed the most important aspect of the educational system, it is their voice that must be heard. It is not that they do not wish to learn; the way they are taught must be questioned. Relevance is important, and the students often question the "why" of what they are learning, but their first concern seems to be the "how" of learning: the atmosphere in which the learning is conducted. They seem to need to know they are respected and cared for. They express a need for a parental/mentor-like relationship with their instructors. The creation of this atmosphere of trust, and non-competitive learning, is the responsibility of the teacher, it is the teacher's actions which most influence the classroom environment.

By the end of this action research project, I began to realize that teaching was a far more complex activity than I had formerly thought. My students had expressed many more needs than the course outline could satisfy. Looking back at my teaching practices and my teaching goals, I began to reinterpret the meaning of those practices and goals. I began to see that many of my goals had been for me and not necessarily for my students. There was a whole set of needs that my students had that I had barely addressed, if at all.

It became very apparent that my ethical positioning could not be developed from a position centered upon myself. The "I" that I wished to construct is an "I" that is responsive to the needs of the other as well as to itself. The question became then how to participate in this life process in a new way, a way that embodied the notions of compassion and ethical well being. When I speak here of ethics, I am referring not to some code or predetermined behavioral guide lines but rather of a way of viewing life. What should guide my decision making processes in the classroom and outside of the classroom? It was the issue of ethical practice and how this should be grounded that began my questioning and my journey.

Framing the Research Question

This dissertation is an attempt to explore this relationship between the Self and the Other, between the student and the teacher, between teachers themselves, and between teacher and the institution. Throughout this dissertation when I capitalize the word "Self" , this is done to differentiate between the common usage of the word which is not capitalized and the

definition of the Self according Baldwin's (1960) Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology which speaks of the Self

> "in reflective consciousness the self is not only subject-subject self but it is also object of its own reflection-object self" p.507

However, this definition is modified by the Buddhist thought that the Self is in reality not objectifiable because it does not exist in an unchanging or permanent state. The capitalized usage of the "Other" refers to the Self or identity formation of those who are not of the Self. The notion of the Self is questioned and understood in a way new to me, which is based upon the understanding of an interdependence between all aspect of school life. For example, a child or adult's home life affects what and how that person learns. It influences how the student relates to the teacher and how the student handles responsibility. Students bring to class their entirety and it is this entirety that makes each one unique. Because each student is unique they respond individually to the classroom situation, they have individual needs and desires that influence the way in which they learn. These students are still actively involved in the process of life, and are as such still changing still becoming; they are not fixed entities which can be boxed and labeled. As well, teachers come to class with their entirety. Who that teacher is and who that teacher has been influences the way in which they relate to their students. It influences what and how they teach. Just as a student's personality, the sum of their experiences determines to a large extent how they interpret the teacher's intentions, the teachers' beliefs and personality traits communicate tacit information to the students about worth and value. This interplay between the students and their teachers is carried out within

an institution which has its own personality. That is, the institution has a character, it demands certain things from its students and teachers, it expects certain things from them and it allows certain things while disallowing others. This inter-relationship of all life's facets, is in a constant state of flux; it is constantly if perhaps at times subtly, changing. An awareness of these changes and reactions to them are part of the being of being a compassionate teacher. For teachers who are aware of this flow and inter connective nature of life, constant critical reflection becomes a part of life.

This dissertation is exploring a way of being a teacher within this interdependent system that is healthy and helpful to the students and the teachers while still fulfilling the major goals of the institution. It will suggest that the responsibilities of teaching go beyond the subject matter and deal with issues of life and sociability.

Since this dissertation is not analytical, it was necessary to find a methodology that would reflect, enhance and further the development of my question. Narration provided the fluidity and the interpretive context within which to develop and explore the question of teaching which is based upon compassion and love. Through narration I can reveal my understandings of this process of being a teacher. Narration allows me to be fluid in the writing of and development of the ideas that themselves came to be through the writing of this dissertation, a process of critical reflection is part of the narrative approach. Narration provides a process for developing the dissertation that approximates the process I use to develop a single painting and a series of paintings. This seems the most appropriate way to proceed.

Chapter Two:

Why Narrative? A Defense of Narrative Exploration

One of the most puzzling and difficult questions to me is where do I stand as a teacher between the sign posts of the institutions' notions of authority and my students' notions of my authority and my own needs as a teacher. Inside this question lie many more questions; how evaluation is arrived at, the balance between fairness to the students and the demands of the institution, are all related to the question of power and authority. My responsibility to the needs of my students other than their academic needs are also defined by how I view my place in the classroom. On what set of criteria are these evaluations to be made? How are these evaluations going to be presented to the students? Where do my responsibilities begin and end as a teacher, with my students, the institution, and my colleagues?

Narrative by its nature helps to define identity and identity helps to position one. Identity gives one the point of perspective from which to view ways of being of being a teacher. Narrative by its nature, helps to define identity positions. It provides a point of departure from which to view the being of a teacher in an art studio.

Narrative Research

Narrative histories provide human interpretations of past events and give meaning to these past happenings. According to Husserl, the past and the present interact together in our understanding of time in a way similar to

our understanding of spatial perception, which is reliant upon the interaction of the foreground and the background.

> "To see a thing is to see it against a spatial background which extends behind it and away from it and from which it stands out. Seeing always "takes in" this background as well as the particular object seen; that is, correspondent to the horizon is a horizon-consciousness that belongs to every perception. " Carr (1986) p. 22

Husserl maintains that the experience of a temporal event is similar to the visual field; the present is represented by the object and the "just-past" is the background upon which we perceive the present. Awareness of the present, then involves memory of the "just past" or what Husserl calls retention. Moreover, Husserl makes a distinction between this notion of retention and another concept, recollection, while retention is part of every temporal experience and includes the "just past" sequence of happenings in an event being experienced, recollection may or may not be a part of every temporal experience, as recollection includes the memory of a past event or sequence of happenings within a past event.

Another important aspect of a temporal experience is the "expectation of the future." Carr (1986) p. 22 Again Husserl makes a distinction between predicting or planning some future event and anticipating the immediate future within an event still being experienced. Following Husserl, it can be said that the experiencing of an event involves a retention of the "just-past" and an expectation of the "just-future" combined with or in tandem with the present. Therefore while events occur in increments of time, we do not gain an interpretation of the event as it is occurring, but rather from our ability to remember the past and expect the future. It needs to be

emphasized that the notion of the "just past" or the "just future" does necessarily refer to short term memory, but rather to all the past and future which are seen as the background to our understanding of an event. An event then can be something such as a single classroom experience or it can be the entirety of a teacher's teaching experience.

My understanding of the object or event I am experiencing is reliant upon my own place in the figure-ground configuration. I can perceive only one side of the object at a time and this is dependent upon where I am located in relation to the object. Each positioning or stance that I take allows me to view the object in a different way to reinterpret my understanding of it. This understanding of the Self's relation to experience is articulated by Carr (1986) when he states,

> "I live through the experience of an objective event like a melody. Again, the parallel with spatial perception holds: the temporality of my experience of a temporal object [event] is like the spatiality of my perception of a spatial object. My perception is not an object [or configuration of objects] in space for me, as it could for an external observer, but it does comprise a vantage point [my body] which is its own "lived through" spatiality. Like the vantage point in spatial perception, the temporality of an experience of a temporal object is not itself an object but a structural feature of the experience." p. 23

Thus life can be seen as a flow of experiences with a present past and expected future. As Carr (1986) notes, life is composed of a series of complex and interrelated events that help to define the meaning of the whole of the life experience. Imperative in this discussion is the importance of the "lived body in the temporal continuity of experience. "Carr (1986) p. 29 Experience is contingent upon a retention of the past and an anticipation of the future. It must be pointed out that this anticipation of the future is

open. That is, the future cannot be predicted accurately; it can only be anticipated. We can develop an expectation of the future from the past but unforeseen happenings can cause the future to take unpredicted turns. When the future does take an unpredicted turn, this unpredicted happening changes the past or at least our interpretation of the past. If this is likened to listening to a melody one can see, as David Carr (1986) suggest, as one listens to a melody certain themes emerge that allow us to predict the future configurations of the melody. However, melodies often contain surprising twists that were not necessarily precipitated by the past sections of that melody. These unpredicted happenings cause us to reevaluate the entire melody and realize that we had not fully understood it's structure. In essence, we were experiencing the melody only as it existed in our mind. We were not experiencing the melody as it was actually occurring.

The understanding of the temporal and spatial nature and experience indicated by Husserl is according to Carr (1986), relevant to an assessment of the teaching experience, because it demonstrates the need for constant critical reflection upon past actions considering the unexpected turns of the present. When the future does not unfold as anticipated then interpretations of the past have not been understood correctly within the context of the event. The past may then be being interpreted in the way in which I would like it to be, rather than in the way in which it is actually occurring.

When I act, that is when I initiate an action, I do so based upon these principles of past retention and future protention. I act to cause some future happening or series of events to occur. My anticipation of the future is based upon my understanding of the past. But this understanding is through more than mere anticipation of the future, by my actions I "affect" the future. I am living through the future and I am causing it. Experience provides me

with a possibility or series of possibilities of future outcomes, but my actions will most often determine which possibilities become realities in the future. If the future does not unfold as one of the possibilities I had anticipated, then I must reinterpret my experiences both past and present. But the present also has meaning in its own right. I am aware at the moment of acting of my action even if I am not aware of the consequences. When I initiate an action, it is to achieve a goal. The future then becomes both an anticipated and a wished for event.

This notion of the "wished for" is important because it informs us of some of the possibilities for action that have not been present in the past. The desired future can be the initiator of new actions directed at constructing the desired Self. This notion of desired Self must not be confused with the notion of desire. When I speak of the desired Self it is within the context of a state of being that for me, is based upon compassion, it is not an object as a concrete or static being that I wish to own. In this way the desired Self represents a way of being that is fluid but is nonetheless shaped by love. As the Self as an object does not exist it can not be possessed and so it is not possible to desire it as an object. With this in mind, Carr's (1986) understanding of passive and active action comes into focus.

> "The future is salient while the present and past constitute its back ground. This is one way, at least, of rendering account of the difference between activity and passivity, Activity is future-centered or focused. And it is not simply attention but intention that is focused there." p. 39

Action, then, involves the mind, the body, and the environment in which an individual exists and is dependent upon an integration of these

factors directed towards the achievement of a goal. An action may be informed by experience and may be inspired by a present desire but the future it brings about will cause either a reaffirmation of past assessments of experiences or it may force reinterpretation of past actions based upon the consequences of that action in the present. Human experience then is inherently structured in a constantly accessible continuum and not "'merely' sequential in their temporality." Carr (1986) p. 45 The experiencing of an event or the initiation of an action has in common the sequence of happening. There is a beginning, a middle and an ending. This is also true of the narrative. The narrative has a past (those pages already read) a present, (the page being read) and a future (the anticipation of the possibilities perceived in the pages to be read). Narrative does not impose this structure upon the event but rather it is a reflection of a structure that already exists in the structure of the life process.

When attempting to understand a single event or action, it is enough to contemplate only the immediate past, but when attempting to grasp the meaning of a long term event such as one's teaching career which is composed of a series of sub-events and actions, then it is necessary to go beyond retention and become reflective upon many experiences. Re-collective memory [memories of experiences] replaces retention memory. The past "makes of the present a being-in-the-world whose richness is inseparable from the accumulated significance of...successive experiences" Kerby (1991) p. 22 The actual past is lost to us it can not be retrieved and changed. All we have left are our recollections of the past, which are subject to interpretation. These interpretations are conditioned by our individual interpretations of past events. As Anthony Kerby suggest, the past is like an archeological find in that one retains only bits and pieces of a past

event and these pieces need to be interpreted in order to give them meaning and place them in the greater context of our lives.
These recollections do not perfectly imitate the original experience; this memory is always influenced or interpreted from the individual's present perspective.

Memory can also be influenced by imagination. Sometimes the past as it was experienced is painful or less exciting than the individual desires it to be: imagination allows us to recreate the past in a more favorable or a more painful perspective than the lived experience. In other words, the past can be reconstructed to suit the present through imagination. To separate and interpret past events from one's imaginings of it requires an awareness of one's desires and one's fantasies. It also requires the seeing of past events in the context of one's life as they are to the present. "Memory attains its important status as it links into and develops part of the story of our lives." Kerby (1991) p. 27 Narrative provides a forum for such reflection upon past events.

Narrative provides the individual with the advantage of acting out of time and with future knowledge. That is to say, narrators have the advantage of hindsight; they can provide a narrative of past events within which interpretations are colored by their knowledge of the consequences of events which occurred after the event being narrated. In a sense the narrator presents the event from the actual future rather than from the anticipated or the desired future. The narrator has interpreted the consequences of the actions taken in the past and gives meaning to the event based upon his/her understanding of those consequences. As Carr (1986) points out this is the difference between the chronicler and the narrator. The chronicler merely records events in sequence while the

narrator interprets, highlights and draws connections in order to achieve a coherent and organized retelling which emphasizes or draws attention to some set of beliefs or concepts.

Thus memories are not merely chronicles of past events; its focus is upon interpretation and connection. As Kerby (1991)notes, "If the past, then, is not to remain just a collection vaguely intuited phantasms, it must undergo interpretation, and this is intellectual work." p. 29 Interpretation gives meaning to the event. In this way the thoughts and intentions I had during this event become more important than the actual event itself. It is through an understanding of those thoughts and intentions that I gain an understanding of who I was and who I am. Since reflecting upon the meaning of past events in this way, I, like the narrator am able to construct my actions in such a way as to create the possibility for the desired future. Individuals do this in their own lives. By telling their own story they come to an awareness of themselves as they are and as they would like to be. The narration helps them to then initiate the most appropriate action for their future as they desire it to be. Carr (1986) sums it up this way,

> "The actions and sufferings of life can be viewed as a process of telling ourselves stories, listening to those stories, and acting them out or living them through...To be an agent or subject of experience is to make the constant attempt to surmount time in exactly the way the story-teller does. It is the attempt to dominate the flow of events by gathering them in the forward-backward grasp of the narrative act. Mink and the other theorists are right to believe that narration constitutes something, creates meaning rather than just reflecting or imitating something that exist independently of it. But narration, intertwined as it is with action, does this during life itself, not merely after the fact," pp. 61-62

As has been seen, narratives as events have a beginning, a middle and an end which separates them from other happenings in life. They also have the narrator, the audience and the character(s). What may be understandable from the above discussion is that the narration may be either social or private. In the social setting the narrator tells the story to offer an interpretation of an event or action or a series of events or actions to clarify or give meaning to the experience for the Other, (the audience). In private narrative the narrator, is also the audience and may be one of the characters in the story as well. While the goal is still to interpret and to provide meaning to an event or action, the difference is that while the social narrative is other-reflective the private narrative is self-reflective. It may be argued that even the social narrative is self-reflective and the audience is present to give authentication to the interpretation already arrived at by the narrator through critical reflection.

Narrative and Identity

Our sense of identity is tied to-and indeed formed-by our history; that is to say, the interaction of persons and events in our lives. Again it is necessary to stress that identity is not being used here to describe a concrete unchanging essence that is a being but rather it describes the fluid understanding of a being for their life process. Since this life process is always in movement, the identity itself is always in a state of change. Lived time is then an integral part of this identity formation. It has already been demonstrated that the interpretations of the present, that which is being lived are dependent on the "immediate past and... in a futural project." Kerby (1991) p. 20-21 There is a linking between the "just past" and the future

projection; consciously or more often unconsciously I make judgments based upon passed events which I then carry into the present and the future. These judgments then become habitual, that is, they become part of my unconscious behaviors, and I make decisions that are based upon these judgments in an unperceiving manner. Habitual in the sense that I act without awareness, I act in certain ways without questioning the validity of those actions within the context of the action. These judgments are based in part upon the cultural milieu in which I am born and in part upon my personality characteristics and in part upon my personal experiences. The above elements are interdependent; that is, they influence each other in a complex manner. However, once made aware of the habitual nature of everyday life, I can then break free of these habits and begin to reconstruct my understanding of my identity.

Narrative plays a major role in the "formation of the self and in the construction, transmission, and transformations of cultures." Kerby ((1991) p. 21 Identity is revealed through an emerging personal story, a story that has a narrative plot characterized by connections across time, by intentions, and by an attitude toward life. Witherell and Noddings (1991) suggest that narrative is more than a personal interpretation or vision of reality it gains its full meaning when seen in relationship to the Others vision, to the social and personal context in which it is occurring.

Narratives thus, involve more than just telling the story, they require a narrator and the stories are directed at a specific group of people. Adults in our culture, (our culture in the sense of western thought) have been dissuaded from being story tellers because of a heavy reliance on objective observation which reveals knowledge in a clinical scientific form. The

subjective nature of story telling reveals the human condition, in human terms of intentions and interpretations.

The personal narrative, the telling of ones own story serves two functions, it allows the listener to "get to know another person" Witherell and Noddings (1991) p. 8; it also allows the narrator to get to know or to understand themselves. This is because as has been said before narration involves more than just recounting events, it involves interpretation and hindsight because of its ability to reevaluate events from a point in the future of the event. The narrator is able to get an understanding or interpretation of themselves by telling their own story in such a way that a coherence or "unity of life" Carr (1986) p. 74 is achieved.

Narration can focus on the motivations for action rather than for the justification of actions. That is to say that through narration the author is able to develop a case for living a compassionate life where in virtue becomes the sign-post which gives meaning and coherence to someones' life. It is through virtuous acts that one gains a unified life experience. This, according to Carr (1986), is MacIntyre's point.

> "MacIntyre's ultimate purpose, of course, is to steer the attention of moral philosophy away from its modern preoccupation with justifying actions and to reinstate the Greek concept of virtue, which for Aristotle was explicitly linked with the whole of a life and its coherence and unity. For MacIntrye one's own life can be viewed as a story in which one functions as both author and principle character or protagonist." p. 74

So far in this discussion of narrative most of the focus has revolved around individual events and actions, but life is composed of a series of interacting or opposing, and sometimes seemingly unrelated events which intersect and dissect each other. Each of these complex events has its own

story which is defined by our past memories, our anticipation of the future and our desires for the future. When attempting to understand our whole life story, it is necessary to incorporate more than retention and protentions, it requires the use of long term or re collective memory. Involved in the concept of recollection are reflection upon and interpretation of past events. In the retelling of these past events, these events may take on a meaning to the narrator which is different from the meaning they had to the narrator at the time when the narrator was living them. In other words, what might have seemed to be a good teaching strategy then, will now be exposed, through knowledge and reflection not available at the time of the event, to be a bad strategy. This new understanding of the event, according to Dilthey, as Carr (1986) suggests, there is a correlation between coherence and understanding. Further, according to Carr (1986), Dilthey, understanding is composed of three elements meaning, value and purpose.

Each of these three elements are dependent upon the temporal standpoint the narrator takes. Understanding the significance of an event evolves through a recollection of that event. How important does it appear in the overall pattern of a person's life? Understanding the value of an event is determined in the present by the narrator's current knowledge and understanding. This interpretation of the event in the present assigns the event a positive or a negative value according to the narrators present beliefs. The purpose of understanding the significance and the value of an event is to help to guide the story teller to precipitate the future and to take new actions which will set forth the possibilities of the desired future. This re-viewing of the story allows the story teller to actively shape and control the future.

The difficulty is that the only time that the full significance of an event can be understood is at the death of the story teller; therefore, the significance is at best only partially understood from the present. Conversely, the present can only be partially understood when seen in the context of the whole of the life story. "Understanding always hovers between these two points of view." Carr (1986) p. 77 This hermeneutic view of life suggests the need for constant reflection and reinterpretation of past events and desired or possible futures. The life story is not over until death. Therefore understanding of the meaning of that life is not complete until death. This is not an argument for relativism, but rather to suggest that interpretation is based upon one's current beliefs. Questions are asked in accordance to this stance in order to understand the significance of the meaning of that event to the present. What is acknowledged then is; there is no overriding universal truth to the meaning of the events of our life but rather that understanding is always influenced by "perspectivism". Therefore because our lives are unfinished until the moment of death, so the interpretation of the past is incomplete until death. By re-examining past events from a new perspective gained from new experiences, the narrator is able to alter the possibilities of the future and to direct the future more accurately towards their present goals. The story-teller is also able to gain a better understanding of what that projected future should be like; the narrator can achieve a clearer view of their desired self.

It has been postulated that understanding the present comes from a process of reflection on and reinterpretations of the past and projections of future possibilities. One of the elements always present in future speculations is the knowledge of our own death. Birth is the beginning of our story and though it is experienced it is rarely remembered. Death is the

closure or ending of the story of someone's life but the experience of it cannot be predicted. My death as my birth is an experience no one can share with me or have for me. These two experiences, my birth and my death are what define my individuality and my separateness from the rest of humanity. These experiences are what bracket my life. While no one can choose the time and circumstance of their birth and few determine the circumstance of their death, it is possible to affect the story that lies between the beginning and the end of the story.

In self narration the narrator, the main character and the author are assumed to be the same person. It is only when the story lacks authenticity that the reader or listener comes to question the oneness of the main character, the author and the narrator. When there appears to be an attempt at deception then the main character becomes separated in the minds of the reader listener from the author/narrator. Each of us is the narrator, the author and the main actor in our own story. While an individual can affect their future through a process of reflection and projection there exists in life the unexpected the unpredictable occurrences, the possibility of chaos.

For most of these unexpected turns, reflection on similar events in the past can illuminate possible actions or reactions to these unpredicted events, but some unexpected events have not precedence. In these cases our projections of the desired future may give us clues as to how to react to the unexpected. Carr (1986) suggests that Dilthey sees life as a constant struggle to find coherence in the chaos of life.

This struggle for coherence forces us to ask not how does this event fit into a pre-existent story but rather "what is the story?" Carr (1986) p. 91 The answer to this question is ever changing as our life unfolds. The story is

changed by our actions and by unexpected events both of which cause us to re-evaluate past events and what and how they contribute to the understanding of our life story. The narration of our life story is then an ongoing fluid process where in the final out come is not known. To Kerby (1991), the understanding of the meaning of life is contingent upon the development of that life's narrative which brings together events which might otherwise seem disparate and not connected. Our existence then is inseparable from the way we tell the story of our life. The language used and the interpretations I place upon my personal history shape the fabric of my being. "I am, for myself, only in so far as I express myself." Kerby (1991) p. 41 In other words, I create and have the possibility of recreating myself through narration.

This suggests that the lived experience of our life has already built within it the notion of narrative. Events are not just merely experienced they are interpreted while they are occurring and they hold within in the confines of memory the ability to be reinterpreted in the future. When an event is related to oneself or to another it is interpreted not just recounted. It is seen from a specific point of view. This perspective colors the meaning of the event and even the perception of that event. No event just happens to us, each event is given meaning by us and this meaning helps to shape our sense of identity.

It is possible that a person might maintain a sense of an unchanging self even when the events in that person's life do not integrate with the identity or construction of that self. This requires that such a person ignore the discrepancies of their life story and, that they never shift their perspective to view the events(s) differently. Anorexics for example always see

themselves as fat even though they no longer weigh what they once did. In their reality, they are still fat.

For most of us "Self-narration is ... both a receptive and a creative-interpretive act." Kerby (1991) p. 47 Narration then includes certain events and excludes others. This selectivity is directed towards the development of meaning. Narrative therefore usually selects those stories which have some specially import to the narrator's life. For many people identity is not much of a question in their day to day existence because they act upon events out of habit. For teachers this can prove to be catastrophic as will be seen later in this dissertation.

Narrative and Language

Kerby (1991) sees that the language one chooses to use reveals what is important to us by expressing our emotional responses to events. These emotions help us to articulate our identity, what we value and how we view the Other. The expression of this sense of Self in turn may effect our emotional stance. Without language, action and gesture have no understood meaning. For instance a baby when it cries, cries for many different reasons; crying can have many different signifiers. It cries because it is hungry, wet, lonely and so on, but those responding to that crying can only project an understanding of the meaning of the infants cries. As well and more important, it is doubtful that the baby has any understanding of the meaning of its crying. It has not named its pain and therefore it cannot say I am (angry wet tired). It lacks a sense of "I" as a way of being because it has not only not named its discomfort it has not named itself. It exists but it is unaware of the meaning of its existence. It is language that gives meaning

to the action or event including the act of being. It a person's private conversations with themselves, the language they use, that defines the meaning of the event or thought upon which they are thinking. This is no different for public discourse. As Kerby (1991) states,

> "In other words, meaning (where it is not what we commonly call "self-evident") is a matter of interpretation, where interpretation that seeks understanding is essentially an act of translating the given expression into what one sees to be an equivalent expression: it is putting the expression into one's own words, one's own language." p. 77

It is important here to distinguish between the casual use of the word "I" and an aware use of the word. In general conversation the use of the expression "I" has very little meaning other that to denote the speaker. That is the speaker is not truly aware of the meaning of the declaration "I" in the complex sense that this word embodies. Here again, the sense of awareness is important. "I" used habitually has little meaning because it only signifies the physical identity of the speaker. However an aware use of the word "I" carries with it an understanding of who that "I" is at that moment, and what that "I" believes, feels and experiences. It defines the being as one who is attempting a static life or one who recognizes life's fluidity and responds to it. An aware "I" brings with it the joy and pain of the utterer.

Language tends to imply that the "I" existed before the action but it is the action which gives understanding or interpretation to the "I". The "I" only has meaning through the interpretation of it's actions. Language is thought to reflect back to us the motivations and ethics of the "I"; before the action is taken and language is thought to do this in a neutral manner. Language

however defines us in an active way, our choice of words and symbols reveals and defines who we are. I become what I say but not in the obvious ways so much as in the tacit use of language. Habitual language usage closes down our ability to see the world in new ways. This fault of language is what the feminist movement has focused on in their fight to have language seen as not only the reflection of thought but, also a reflection of the person uttering the words. Language, once recognized for its power, also can be reflexive and revealing. By being aware of the power of language, I can reconstruct my past, present and future Self. Through a critically aware reflective narration of my history, I can rewrite the meaning and continuity of my life to reveal my Self.

The use of the term "I" allows the narrator to place themselves in the subject position in a story. The use of the term "I" separates the narrator from the Other and defines the narrator with their juxtaposition to the Other. The identity of the subject is revealed through its thoughts, actions and words, it does not have identity without these. Language provides a means for "reflective consciousness" Kerby (1991) p. 69 Without a reflective consciousness, "I" is constructed by others and is given habitual behavior traits; as when a character is only revealed in a novel through description by another character.

Language offers structure to the thoughts and events in a person's life. Without language there are no signs and symbols to create order and meaning to the chaotic happenings in our life. What ever word or words I use to describe someone or something sets the boundaries in which that person or thing exists. The Other is also created or constructed by the language I use to describe them as well as the language that the Other uses.

The danger in this is to make the assumption that the Self exists in some physical form. While it is true that our physical being affects our self view, the Self is in reality a construct. It must of course also be said that our construct of our Self will effect our physical being. Perhaps by realizing that the physical organ we call the brain is not the Self but merely an organ, and the Self is a construct of the mind, one can begin to break free from a static view of Self and Other.

Given that one's own story is never complete until death and that events in life cannot be fully understood until the end of life then it must be assumed that life is a series of events unfolding, revealing the meaning of being a teacher. So then this dissertation will not be complete until my death. It is in a process of unfolding. Even as it is being written, new experiences, new knowledge is requiring me to reinterpret the meanings of the stories which I am narrating. The writing of the dissertation is in itself causing me to reflect critically on the meaning and significance of the events in my life. These reinterpretations then lead to new series of possibilities for the future. I anticipate the future in ways that I had not previously considered. The content of my desired self and its desired future are also being changed and modified by events occurring in my present, including the writing of this dissertation. The process of writing is then a mirror for the process of my life in that both are fluid activities changed by new events which altered the meanings of past events. My understanding of myself and my life is dependent upon an understanding of these events seen from the future of these events. I understand these events from the perspective I chose to view them and yet these events determine the perspective I take. Again the circular nature of understanding and interpretation is reaffirmed.

The Merits of Narrative

Every person's life story is a complex configuration which is interwoven with the complex stories of others with whom they encounter. In many of these social interactions our story is only passively connected to the Others. However, Kerby (1991) suggest that it is in the social context that much of our own reflections gain continuity and meaning. Narration then is the story being made known, making narration a secondary activity. It is through narration however that events are interconnected and through this interconnection, given meaning and continuity. "To narrate the figure of the past is... to create a portrait of ourselves." Kerby (1991) p. 53 It is this self reflection which makes visual the "I am me" understanding. This self -- reflection is not a mirroring of who I was in the past but it is a reinterpretation of the way I see myself then and now and into the future. Narrative causes an awareness of what was, is and might be. It highlights the interactive nature of the past present and future and brings these three elements to the present lived moment. Narratives act to give meaning to our lives and in giving meaning our lives become authenticated.

In telling the story of our life, new understandings are revealed that would otherwise remain hidden. Narration reveals suffering that was ours and that we caused. It reveals the good and the bad of our life and the telling which brings awareness also frees us to move beyond the past and into the future.

Narration, by revealing the past, also makes visible the possibilities of the future. Through the telling of our story and the listening to others' stories a whole range of ethical positions becomes apparent and by exploring the understood consequences of our actions and of others, it is easier to define

our positioning. Narration helps us to define who we are and who we aspire to be. According to Kerby (1991), narration reveals our view of the possible futures to which we might aspire . But narration does more than just reveal possible ways of being, narration allows us to place an ethical judgment on an experience that was not possible at the moment of the event's occurrence. In other words, narration allows us to reevaluate the meaning and the consequences of past events.

The way in which a story is related and interpreted is very much influenced by the ethical position of the narrator at the time of the telling of the story. It is also important to understand that this ethical positioning is influenced by our emotional state when a story is unfolding and when a story is being told. "In life and art, narrative and significance work in a symbiotic relationship" Kerby (1991) p. 55 In other words an emotional state may call up a story from the past and a story from the past cause a certain emotional state. Narrative then can either allow the unfolding plot to confer an emotional significance to the event or the author might choose to nudge the plot in a specific direction to make a point. In both processes meaning and narration are interconnected.

The drama of human lives is the place where in value is revealed. Drama highlights the choices made and the consequences of those choices. Who I am is revealed in the choices that I make, the actions that I take, and the response I make to the consequences of these actions. Of course this understanding or revealing is of an interpretive nature. That is to say, there is no true self to be understood only an interpretation based on current ethical and emotional beliefs. So that even the past self is only a construct, but it is a construct which allows me to better define the future that I seek.

Understanding the future that I seek allows me to act in ways that bring the future to the present live moment.

Narration also allows the narrator to find continuity in events or personal history that is not always readily apparent. Narrative helps to reveal the most hidden desires and beliefs of the main character and demonstrates how these desires and beliefs are interwoven throughout the diversity of events in a life. This unity also gives meaning to our life. Narration however, goes beyond revealing meaning but it also adds judgment to the meaning. That is through narration, the story teller can make an ethical judgment upon the goodness or wrongness of an event or series of events. This judgment then, by its very nature, reveals the possibilities for the future by allowing the narrator to understand what is of value to them. The interpretation given to a story reveals the ethical and emotional state of the storyteller and a critical reflection upon this state allows for a reinterpretation of the story and thus new knowledge. Each individual creates their own values and these values define us. These values make us feel responsible for our actions, those actions that we make consciously and unconsciously. In fact the self-reflection found in narrative reveals our habitual thoughts and actions and renders them conscious and open to scrutiny. As Kerby (1991) states,

> "To draw a textual (and hermeneutic) analogy, it is from our fund of knowledge about the world and about language that we are able to constitute and appreciate the intricate plot of a novel. But the novel, in turn may not leave us as innocent as before we read it. In the end the novel speaks about us." p.58

Narrative then reveals the "I" to "me". It reveals who I am ethically emotionally and socially by contrasting and comparing my beliefs to those

of the society in which I live. Narrative also reveals those areas of my life in which I am not being who I think I am or who I wish to be. Narrative also allows me to bring in to focus the desired self and then to make this wish for identity into the present.

The Authentication of Narrative

The question arises when discussing narrative, to what extent is the narrative just a creative retelling of the event and to what extent does it mirror the actual past event? Where is the truth? Postmodernism has questioned the notion of 'authenticity' and 'truth.' There is no Truth with a capital letter "T" in narrative story telling. All narratives are reconstructed. In this dissertation, authenticity and truth shall be understood as my own rhetorical logic when trying to understand myself within the context of my students and the institution. The answer is, in reality, quite simple. The truth lies in the meaning of the event at the moment of its retelling. The event is never told as it occurred for this in itself is unknowable because each of us perceives the event somewhat differently. Beyond that, the event itself has no meaning until the teller gives it meaning. The teller as an ever changing being perceives the event differently with each telling. In fact the narrator re-experiences the event in the present through memory. The event remembered is not the event that occurred but is reconstruction of the event. This reconstruction is being experienced and interpreted in the present. The event has meaning because of all of the events that have occurred after it's occurrence that leads it to the present, or in other words, all that occurs after the event and before it is re-membered or re-constructed. The narrator gives authenticity to the "truth" of the event in the author's interpretation of

the event. This interpretation needs to resonate with the hearer of the recollection to avoid relativism. This does not mean that the hearer might not place upon the event a different interpretation, but merely that the hearer can relate to or experience the event in a way similar to the narrator's interpretation. In this way the actual sequences of the event have much less importance than the meaning of the recollection of the event in the present. It is this meaning which will affect future action and interpretations of other events most remembered and yet to come. It is the interpretation of these recollections that defines the ~I am ~Me~ state of the present moment.

To understand how I arrived at my present understandings concerning the nature of Self, the nature of being a compassionate teacher and the complex interdependent relationships that exist in the classroom, it is necessary to briefly discuss the procedures I used and the reflections I had upon the nature of identity. This next part of the dissertation then is directed at establishing the grounding for the narratives found throughout the dissertation. It is an exploration of the nature of Self, a reflection upon ethics, both as they are defined in the literature and as I have personally come to live them as values of compassion and love in the classroom.

Chapter Three:

Narrative Methodology as it Pertains to the Ethics of Caring

Thesis Methodology

I am a Painter

This dissertation was written in the way in which I paint. This seemed to be the most appropriate manner as I have a greater experience as a painter than I do as a writer. The problem was to find some way to translate the visual process to a written one without losing my Self in the process. In other words, my paintings express my way of being my thoughts and my thought processes and I wanted the writing of this dissertation to reflect these concepts .

Like my painting. this meant that the dissertation started out rather formless, without a set of themes. The idea was to explore the notion of compassionate teaching. Much as when I paint I choose to explore the nature of my being and the nature or meaning of painting. In a painting, I start with very little, the canvas is wet so that everything is running into each other and the form only emerges as I work on and respond to the painting. It means that the painting can take any direction that presents itself and I must constantly choose between options that arise. This is how the dissertation was constructed. It started out with vague notions that were crystallized as I read, participated in the Buddhist seminars, observed my self, my students, and my classes with a new intensity and reflected upon both the past and the present understanding of my experiences as a teacher

and as a painter. Through this process certain themes emerged which are explored in future chapters most notably chapter eight. The stories my students have relayed to me are presented to demonstrate how these themes emerged. In order for the reader to experience this emergence in the way that I did the stories for the most part come before the themes as they did for me. The notions of awareness which imply for me ethical decision making as apposed to habitual or encoded decision making emerged as the strongest theme.

The dissertation methodology, therefore, has been fluid and organic. A number of chapters were developed and worked on simultaneously just as in the manner in which I paint. There is a random structure to the process. It's completion came when I felt I had arrived at a point where I am unable to do more; perhaps it is time for a new painting.

Narrative and Ethics

Narrative research has the

> "Possibilities of the legitimating of the narrative and narrative research that provide us with a way of understanding the field that may break with the primacy of the way we understand the theory/practice nexus." Aoki (1991) p.4

To understand narrative again , it is necessary to hear what is being said. The narrative needs to be listened to with an open mind. The listening should provide a doorway into what was hitherto closed to us: the interpretations, reflections and feelings of the storyteller. The writing of the narrative needs careful consideration as well. Finding a language that reveals and de-

centers the storyteller is the quest of the narrator. Aoki (1991), would suggest that the answer is in listening, but I would not exclude the eye. For me it is the juxtaposition of what the eye sees and the ear hears that reveals the gaps in my understanding. Tne knowledge I seek to reveal lies hidden within these gaps. My themes reveal themselves to me through a reflection upon these gaps of understanding.

The existentialist thought that life as experienced, is reality suggests that understanding is not found in abstract theories but in the day to day life. It suggests that a person is not separate from the culture in which they were born nor are they separate from the personal history they have within the larger history of that culture. Interpretation comes from within this circle; it reveals the circle and yet is defined by it. However, no one needs to be trapped within this circular frame of understanding if they choose not to be. By giving credence to the Others' interpretations, I can, within the large history of my being, open my circle of understandings.

Interpretations are not enough in themselves; they must be questioned regarding their "authenticity." They must be reflected upon in a critical way. Once they have obtained a momentary authenticity, (momentary because new understanding may still bring into question the validity of the interpretation), then some judgment as to what these interpretations are revealing to us must be made. I must ask myself if I am seeing clearly what is occurring and whether this is what I want to be occurring. Moreover, the question of how this judgment can be made arises. The judgment must fall back on the ethical stance of the individual. This "I" with which I am seeing and the "ear" with which I am hearing are then brought into question. The modernist view of the world has been built around the notions of power and control and the resulting conflicts which arise in the this struggle.

This modernist idea of control and power has written the interpretations of the past. The world is understood as a place of control, power and powerlessness. This conception of the world has been accepted by many as a universal, the way the world is; human nature, as one of my students repeatedly tells me, is to seek dominance over others, and if necessary, through violence. Images of power are the images of idolization. The need to exert a position of power has created a hierarchy that traverses the entirety of the social structure so that even the most powerless person will grab at power over his/her equally powerless neighbor.

It has been said that existentialism has ignored the interconnectiveness of our social life, our sense of belonging, in its blind passion for asserting the rights and freedoms of the individual. The ethical concerns of our social selves have been largely ignored. The balancing of the individuals' beliefs with the social reality in which that individual lives needs to be addressed. By rejecting the modernist concept of human nature, the door opens to developing an ethic which is collaboratively arrived at. This collaborative ethic would allow for other ways of understanding the world, that do not rely on intellectual ideas of power and control. For example, to arrive at a collective ethical position, I am required to listen and understand that the reality of the Others' reality is as valid to them as my own reality is to me. It requires the rejection of the concept of truth as an absolute, the acceptance that other interpretations have their own authenticity, their own validation.

Given this position and conviction, dialogue then becomes the pivotal point on which understanding occurs. Through dialogue--a sharing of realities-- self and other can merge (or at least meet on common ground). In an open state of mind, the Others' reality can become understandable and can even become part of our reality. Meaning changes through the

sharing of interpretations. The notion of parallel realities becomes acceptable. It is no longer a case of choosing one world view or the other or deciding on one over the other. A collective ethical position constitutes an acceptance of plurality, and the acceptance of difference. This requires love and respect for the Other, rather than seeing the other in opposition to the Self. It requires a return to the question of ethics, and an honest evaluation of what each individual has to gain maintaining his or her individual world-view. Ethics is at the heart of the dialogue.

> "The power of narrative and dialogue as contributors to reflective awareness in teachers and students are that they provide opportunities for deepened relations with others and serve as springboards for ethical action. Understanding the narrative and contextual dimensions of human actors can lead to new insights, compassionate judgments, and the creation of shared knowledge and meanings that can inform professional practice." Witherell and Noddings ((1991) p. 3

Ethical stances determine how to respond to the dialogue of the Other. It opens or closes our circle of understanding. If a code of ethics cannot be built upon some universal understanding of humanity's essence nor on some cultural essence, nor even on some essence of self, from where does our ethical being spring? It appears that the stance from which we critically interpret and reflect upon experience determines to a large extent our judgments of those interpretations. This perspective is the ethical ground upon which the interpreter stands.

The Postmodern Subject-Self according to Berman

In all future discussion of the notion of Self in this dissertation, the concept of the Self is one of a Self in constant flux. There is no essence of Self, no objective Self that can be "gotten at". The Self is a construction of the mind, and exists only as such a construct. When I speak of the "desired Self" or the "wished-for" Self, I am speaking of a way of being, again, not an objective Self. The word "desired" here means an awareness of a way of being that one hopes to achieve; it is not something that can be possessed, but rather it a way of existing that one aspires to attain.

Western society is plagued with a fault, according to Berman, "there exists an unhappy gap between the Self and the Other." Berman ((1991) p. 19 This void creates an emptiness that is understood at the deepest somatic level . The mind perceives that something is not right, but it does not understand from where this uneasiness arises. What the mind understands is a need to find that which is missing. The mind, because it only dimly senses the problem, attempts to fill the void with secondary satisfactions. The desire for success, sexual satisfaction, or social acceptance are all attempts by the mind to heal that which it cannot heal. The Self-Other split goes beyond the intellectual comprehension deep into the very cells of each of us. Nevertheless, what the mind can neither fully comprehend not fully articulate, the body understands, perhaps from it's first being.

Our first awareness of this separation of Self and the loneliness it implies, may occur within the womb. Even before the unborn child separates physically from its mother, it may, on a body level, understand it's Self and its relationship to the placenta. Such an understanding need not

be a source of internal conflict but merely an awareness of self but in western society it has been seen a painful experience to be rebelled against. The birth experience is not as benign. In a brutal and direct way, birth imbeds within our body's cells the fear and the isolation associated with the Self-Other split. While the body, in the deepest sense, is aware of this fault, the mind only becomes somewhat conscious of "the value perception that something is missing, at about the age of three." Berman (1991) p 224 This awareness is the first indication of the pain of isolation we may experience throughout our lives.

> "With the thought "I am me", a new level of existence opens up for us. There is a tear in the fabric, and the Self (-) Other relationship remains the issue that we shall have to negotiate for the rest of our lives." Berman ((1991) p 25

Awareness of the Self-Other reality of existence can be considered culturally constructed and its implications, is an educational process that relies on the existence of others. At the center of this understanding is the phenomenon of mirroring. However, the actual mirroring, the observing of myself in shiny surfaces, plays only a small role in the process of recognizing and defining Self. A much more important aspect of mirroring is the 'reflection' of Self that the Other 'mirrors' back to me. The external self, the one I see in the mirror of the Other and the internal Self, that which I understand myself to be internally, are intertwined. They can only be understood if viewed as two parts of a whole.

Simply to understand there is an internal Self and an external Self is not threatening. The shock comes in realizing that I am an Other to others.

Others can re-interpret who I am in ways that don't coincide with my internal understanding of my Self. This does not necessarily change my inner understanding of my Self but it misrepresents it. The "lived distance" Berman (1991)p 36 separates us from the cosmos of our existence. The Self I understand myself to be is overlaid or buried beneath a social "me" constructed by myself and others; it is not who I am but whom I appear to be. The deeply felt body experience of Self is covered over by an intellectually constructed Self. It becomes a Self designed through both physical and social mirrorings. However, this does not destroy the internally known Self. It exists in the body. This struggle between the internal Self and constructed external Self is at the heart of the pain; both the struggle and the pain it produces reside in the fault or rift between Self and Other.

> "Object relations see the basic issue of the human condition as being one of meaning and cognition, and object loss (loss of other) as being fundamentally the loss of a comprehensible world." Berman ((1991) p. 42

This pain or struggle can be reduced or even neutralized.

This antagonistic relationship of Self-Other is a Western construct. But even in Western culture, this relationship is not constant. While most societies recognize the existence of Self and therefore of Other, this recognition is not always cause for concern. Within other societies the split between Self-Other may be weak, non-threatening or nonexistent .

The notion that the Self is the Other and therefore part of it's Self, allows for the peaceful coexistence of individuals. Self is not one entity, but a number of states of being; "Otherness" is but one of these states. This view

of the world can allow for a blurring of the boundaries between Self and Other which makes the space between Self and Other into a place for continuous transformation and reflection. If Self and Other are shared states, the Other is not a threat but a source of transformational power.

If the blurring of the Self-Other boundary provides peace for some, for others it is a great source of fear. "Where does me end and not-me begin?" This fear of confiscation of the Self by the Other can promote the existence of the ego. The Other may become the enemy, something to be feared. Our ego cannot prevent us from some confiscation of Self that is always present at any moment in our lives, but it does prevent complete or massive loss of identity. Also the fear of loss of Self to the Other can cause the ego to widen the gap between Self and Other. This creates an even greater sense of alienation. The threat of a loss of identity shakes the Self to its foundations. To weaken the Self-Other delineation in Western culture is a form of heresy. Extending the bounds of reality (which is in itself, a construct) challenges the foundations of existence. The tendency is to marginalize anyone or anything which threatens to blur the Self-Other boundaries. For example, women are often marginalized by men because the reality of their biological sex weakens the notion of difference. We are all born of females. This is a commonality shared by most mammals. In this sense, Self and Other are the same and have the same origins. Extending this to other marginalized groups in society, it can be seen that groups are marginalized to strengthen the position of the dominant socially-constructed Self. The self that has attempted to hide the 'internally known Self.' The difference in appearance of non-whites in our society reinforces the separation of white Self to non-white Other. Thus, non-white Others according to some must be kept separated and repressed,

otherwise they might challenge the constructed superiority of the Self that White Western culture has created. If all were to be valued equally, we would blur the line again. It would cause a questioning of the constructed Self and perhaps a revealing of the internal Self. This fear of confrontation with the internal Self and an exposing of its pain, may propel us to reinforce the Self-Other relationship, in a power-dominated, oppressive context.

The revelation that I am not who I have constructed myself to be seems a notion too catastrophic to face for many individuals. Unfortunately, it is only by confronting the internal Self and realizing that it is a construct which is in a constant state of flux and which has no concrete existence, can I heal the wound caused by the division of Self from Other and come to an understanding of where I wish to guide the process of my being. By facing the consequences of my actions on the lives of others, I can learn how to change my behaviors so I can become one who is ethically responsible to myself and to the world.

As has been stated, in Western industrial society, the need for power and control can often lead to marginalizing of all those people who are viewed as "different" and to creating enemies out of those people who disagree with our personal construction of "reality". This is reflected not only in our interactions with other humans but in our treatment of our environment, and of animals. Animals, and indeed all of nature are viewed as less important than human beings. The sacred Other (nature) has now become despised, useful only in how it can benefit our social system, a system that supports our constructed superior Self. Animals that remind us of our common bond to nature are especially threatening, chimpanzees or apes for example. In their eyes I can see mirrored my own

vulnerability and insignificance. I can see that I am only one part of a large system, not its master. Such reminders are humbling. Nature must be subdued or destroyed so that I may reaffirm my sense of mastering over the natural world. If animals and the environment can be seen in this manner, how long will it be before marginalized humanity is also seen as threatening and disposable? Some would say that day arrived a long time ago.

I might think that I can attempt to heal the pain of the Self/Other separation by identifying with the external-constructed image of my Self. This is the image that Other projects upon me. The relationship becomes one of either/or, but not one of compromise. I can bury my 'internal sense of Self' under a constructed skin that better reflects the mirrored Other I see in the Other's response to me. This denying of my own perceptions is painful, because it is a denial of whom I understand myself to be. It is far more important to understand who I wish to be, what the consequences of those wishes are, and how to bring these wishes into being in the present. If I involve the Other in this shaping of the "desired" Self, then I may be able to remove the conflict between my Self and the Others' conception of me.

The attempt to become the Others' conception of my Self occurs when I have a need to be accepted by the Other. At the same time I fear that the Other has taken away that which makes me, ~Me~. When I am externally motivated I am vulnerable to confiscation. I equate loss of identity, of internal Self, with death. Without this sense of ~Me~, who am I? How can I reside in the world? Unless I have a sense of Self, I am forever in the power of those whom I have allowed to reconstruct ~Me~. I am only what they allow me to be or so goes western thought.

What seems to be emerging is an ambivalent attitude towards life. On one hand, I want to experience it and on the other hand, I fear the experience of it, so I try to construct a false life that ignores the actualities of my existence. I live in excess and deny that it is partly my excess that is robbing others of even the barest of life's necessities. I trample my environment and then turn a blind eye to the consequences, even when these consequences may prove life threatening to the planet. I have an inability or unwillingness to accept my place in the universe. My lack of Self love drives me to create a socially constructed Self that is loved, feared and/or respected by the Other. I have become externally motivated to seek an internal peace. On the other hand, I realize that there is no Self to lose and because I construct and direct the flow of my existence, I gain a personal power. This power brings to me a confidence to take part in life, to experience it and to feel the joy of it. I am not a passive victim in life, but rather I am actively involved in and in charge of my life's direction. I can become a being who acts out of passion and compassion, and in that passion there is joy.

The Self and Critical Reflection

This externalizing of the Self is a false act which as has been shown results in pain, anger, and frustration. If we adopt an external view of the Self, the ethic we choose to live by, the way life is lead, and the choices made within it, one is also externally determined. Understanding that the Self is constructed frees us to shape it in many ways. According to Shusterman (1988) Rorty would suggest that

> "There [is] no point in trying to penetrate our social roles to find a common human essence which is not there, but even the idea of an underlying coherent individual essence of a particular personhood (one's own true self) is a myth... The self is seen as 'centerless', a collection of 'quasi selves', the product of 'random assemblages of contingent and diosyncratic needs' shaped and modified by 'a host of idiosyncratic, accidental episodes' transformed by distorted memories. " p. 341

The Self has no substance; it cannot be measured scientifically. It exists only for the moment, and is defined by the physical, spiritual, emotional, social and intellectual components of existence. In each situation I am a different Identity. There is the "I" that is a teacher, the "I" that is a painter, and the "I" that tries to write about each of these selves. Yet I am still the "I" that is a painter when I am the "I" that is a teacher. These separate selves never act independently; they are always in some form of interrelationship. Often this relationship is one of tension and conflict, but it can also be one of interplay and mutual benefit. The Self is constructed by our beliefs through the interpretation of incomplete memories that have been reconstructed through the advent of experiences which have followed. Knowing that one's Self is constructed, each individual is free to construct it in a number of ways, never the less, the individual is left with the question of what to base one's construction of Self upon.

Constructing the Self

There is a place of being which allows for constant transformation. Living in such a place, requires a fluidity of Self. It requires an acceptance of the Self as being a composite of many Selves and yet more than these Selves. To live in this place is to nurture the Self. This place accepts the

metamorphic nature of the Self as it is exposed to new ideas and new experiences.

> "As long as we stand outside we are outsiders,...for that very reason we can never know the thing itself, that all we can know is about - which means that we can never know what our real self is" Suzuki (1960) pp 25-26

Once I becomes aware of the 'shape' of our identity as it has been - its colors, its composition, its portrait - I can take brush in hand and begin to reshape the Self. I can modify the palette, change the composition or add and subtract from the Self. In repainting I can become more aware of the Self that I wish to be. Just as "I" the painter change my direction and my goals because of my painting of the picture, the picture painted, the materials at hand, the history of art and personal experience, I can reconstruct my Self repeatedly as I gain a greater understanding of life and my desired place in it. Each painting of Self, reflected upon and responded to by others, the consequence of that painting and it's history, reveals to me the Self's shape and its "wished-for" shape.

The shape revealed is not in the present but is in the past. I can never reflect upon my Self as it is, only as it has been. This does not prevent me from changing what it will be in the future. By reflecting upon the past and the consequences of the Self's actions in the past, I can know how to reconstruct the future Self in order to become that which I desire to be. Moreover, the reconstructing of the Self will have consequences; by reflecting upon these consequences in their turn, I can again begin to reconstruct my "desired self".

Since living is a way of being which is constantly filled with experience, I am constantly reevaluating the Self that I am seeking to be. Each moment of time reveals something to me. Sometimes these moments of being are strengthened by my wish for way of being; sometimes experience modifies this wish and other times these moments of experience change the desired Self in a profound way. The goal of all reevaluations to bring the desired Self (which implies future Self), into the present. This means that one lives as though the desired Self has already been achieved. It is important again to remember that this desired state that I am referring to; is a compassionate way of being and not a concrete objectification of the Self. Native North Americans have a saying that puts this notion clearly: "walk what you talk" or in other words, be what you wish to be now.

This way of being is determined in part by the construction of a personal ethic. It is this ethic that can bind the several "quasi selves" together and allow for a harmony of action between them; this personal ethic can reduce the tensions between selves and their ways of being. How then, can I arrive at a coherent personal ethic if the various selves which compose me are in a state of conflict?

Much of the current literature concerning the development of ethical behavior seems be attempt to prescribe a code of ethics that can be applied blindly to any event. However, I hope to demonstrate that codifying ethics is a direct contradiction to the meaning and purpose of developing and living an ethical life.

Chapter Four:

Developing a Personal Ethic

(A review of the current literature)

The traditional approach to developing a theory of ethics has been to attempt to find and define humankind's' "intrinsic or essential nature." Shusterman (1988) p. 342 These theories are based on the often conflicting positions of what humans ought to do in relationship to what they can do. Post modernists, however, have found the notion of universal human nature highly questionable. The cultural diversity of the world's peoples seems to suggest that there is no definable, consistent, human core or nature. An examination of the history of the world also seems to discredit any strong claim to an essential human nature. If there is no strong argument for universal human nature, is there an argument for cultural universality? Is there within a country such as Canada or even a province such as Alberta, a consistent ethical essence? Close examination seems to suggest that the answer is no. Cultural diversity, economic stratification, variants of religious belief, age, and so many other divergent factors which impact upon ethical choice, makes the emergence of an ethical essence impossible. If, in modern society, we cannot build theories of ethical behavior based on some universal, be it human nature or culture, then how are we to uncover the correct or ethical code by which we should guide our lives?

When left with the dilemma of ethical development, many of us have turned to morality to guide us in our defining of our Self(s) and the ethical code we apply to it. However if we again critically reflect upon the nature of morality we discover that as Shusterman (1988) reveals, morality is unable to

adequately deal with the complex nature of ethical being. Ethical living is reflective and accepts the tenant that there are many ways of being that are good and beneficial while morality sees only one way based upon some predetermined sets of universals.

Morality, then, negates the notion of critical reflection, reevaluation and reinterpretation by its insistence on universals. It reinforces these universalized standards with the introduction of the fear of punishment and the anticipation of rewards. Morality suggests that there is an unbreakable code of behavior that is not subject to circumstance. Life, however, is a series of circumstances which are always in flux both in nature and the nature of their combination; as such, it seems questionable to apply a code of behavior based on a sense of universals to something which has no universal structure.

There is a difference between ethics and morality. Unlike morality, ethics is a way of conducting ourselves that is not based on religious principles (which imply universality), although ethical principles may be found in some religions. Ethical living is that which benefits all those involved, purely because it is a mode of living which reinforces the belief that all persons should be equally valued. Those able to do "good," that which benefits those affected, do so, not for personal profit, but because they believe that doing good for others is the ethical way to behave. There will be spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and social benefits, but these are not the motivations for ethical thought and behavior. An example of the harm that a narrow, rigidly defined morality can do in the educational forum, follows.

I was discussing my dissertation concerns with a young man in my evening drawing class one day when he related this story to me. He

had attended a strict Catholic high school. At this school he was suspended because he brought in a drawing of a mermaid with her breasts exposed. He was told that the work was evil and he had to be punished for creating it. He was also severely reprimanded for a painting he did of a man and a woman standing outside a cave. He was told that the cave represented the devil and the picture suggested that the man would drag the woman into the cave and rape her. While I did not get to see the cave painting, he did bring in the mermaid drawing to show me. For me, it was innocuous and innocent. The only evil I could ascertain was the "evil" that his principal and teacher projected on the work. This young man pretended that he was not affected by the suggestions that these works of art revealed the presence of evil in him (made by his teacher) but that was not so. We spent much time discussing the situation, and, several times during our discussion, he seem to need reassurance that I did not see evil in him or his work. Even though this boy expressed a lack of respect for his teacher, he was profoundly affected by the teacher's remarks, and it showed in his need for reassurance and acceptance. His self image had been confiscated by his principal and reconstructed for him in a negative way.

This teacher's moral stance lead to his behaving in an unethical manner towards his student. So consumed by his own sense of right and wrong he failed to hear or to see the young man in his class. He projected upon his student an interpretation of a state of mind that was in reality non-existent. He never measured the consequences of his words and actions upon this student. The student was not allowed the validity of his own interpretation of the painting or the drawing. In this instance, the religious

Self of the teacher and the academic Self of the teacher were in synch with each other, but not with the student. The teacher was acting completely within his own view of the world, while failing to understand or accept that there are views other than his own. The teacher also failed to empathize with the boy's feelings. He insisted upon reading the pictures through a grid of morality that he himself had learned rather than developed through critical reflection.

The effect of this event on the young man's life has been profound. Even now, several years later, when he is presented with an opportunity to utilize the nude in his work, he remembers the accusations of this teacher and he seeks validation. The nagging doubt about his own personality reemerges. It is almost as though the actual consequences of this teacher's actions was to hinder rather than to help this young man, though I am sure that this was not his intention. The teacher's lack of awareness, however, did result in damage being done to this young man's identity formation. The teacher seems to have viewed this student as some kind of threat to his way of life. The teacher's actions suggest a need to punish rather than to inform the student. Further, the teacher seems to feel that he has the right to impose his religious views on others. In his zeal to convert this young man to a set of religious beliefs, he over stepped the boundaries of his role as teacher and principal: teachers can question and through that questioning attempt to reveal other ways of viewing the world but education should be a place of freedom and expression of ideas, and such expression should not be punished.

The Nature of Ethics

Much of the educational literature dealing with ethics that I found was somehow prescriptive in nature. It either focused on a 'professional code of ethics' or the articles were concerned with ways of making teachers ethical. Some people such as Jonas (1989) suggest that teachers must hold to a code of ethics and which has no room for subjective interpretation; such a rigid application of the code is seen as a way of insuring that a professional standard is maintained at all times. The problem with such a rigid set of guidelines is twofold: first, how such a code be enforced, and second, does having a code make a teacher ethical? It is still very possible to do damage to students while working within the structure of a given code of ethics, just as it is often easy to ignore or circumvent them. A code may act as a guideline, but it often ignores or is unable to incorporate, the contextuality and multi-conflictual nature of daily life in a classroom. Rigid ethical guidelines will not help teachers act responsibly and ethically in a classroom situation in which two parts of the code are in conflict, or when special circumstances dictate unique solutions. A code's main function seems to be one of administrative efficiency, such efficiency may have little to do with the realities of teaching.

Critical Reflection is seen by many educators as a process of understanding that better addresses the lived experiences of ethical dilemmas in the classroom . Many educators suggest that there are certain basic moral components of for ethical education. These vary from educator to educator but it appears that if we can just acquire these skills, follow this prescription, than we will have it: we will be "ethical." This presents ethics as a subject to be studied rationally; it suggests that adequate, functional

theories of ethics already exist and we just need to adopt the appropriate one. Unfortunately, the problem of teaching applied ethics is that these theories are often abstract. Rationality is not the only way of knowing in the classroom. We know from experience, from intuition, and from feelings, and these can sometimes contradict rationality. Ethics (by it's very nature), cannot be forced upon people in an authoritarian manner. Ethical theories serve only to inform us of some of the possibilities but cannot be used as a formula for behavior. Blindly relying on theories and accepting theories as truth has many dangers, the most important of which is that such acceptance ends the process of critical reflection. Theories offer ways of being that are static, and a rather universal way of seeing the world that does not accommodate the ever-changing nature of our world.

> "Buber would warn us that moral growth occurs only when the involvement of the teacher with students is direct and where the teacher tries to answer questions to the best of his or her knowledge and conscience... a teacher must accept the student as they can be and wrestle with them openly and compassionately to enable them to grow in an ethical sense... the teacher must take responsibility for his or her acts and conduct the decisions as real battles for truth." Watras (1986) p. 6

While I agree with Buber's basic tenets, I would also recognize that teachers must be willing to learn from their students. I would also question the notion of 'truth' and substitute understanding in its place; truth is based on subjective interpretation. Just as students' ethical beliefs are open for critical scrutiny, so should teacher's ethical beliefs be open to question by students. Ethical growth is achieved in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. It is a process of construction and reconstruction that is facilitated by critical reflection upon interpretations and reinterpretations of events.

Forming a Sense of Reflective Practice

Just what is critical reflection? John Smyth (1989) contends that, while the return to a focus on reflective practice is in part driven by a wish to empower teachers, it has all too often become prescription. This demand on reflection, coupled with a set of guidelines and predetermined goals, has undermined the effectiveness and the benefits of critical reflection. When reflection is divorced from the contextuality of the classroom, with its ethical and political components, then it is just another technical and theoretical formula which has little connection to the day to day realities of teaching. Critical reflection needs to "reintroduce into the discourse about teaching and schooling a concern for the 'ethical, personal and political." Smyth (1989) p. 3

It is the school system and the techno-political school system that drives it, that largely determines or perpetuates the social-economic-political-ethical environment that our society adopts. To artificially separate out the act of teaching from this environment, and define it as just a technical process absent from value structures is to deny the reality of the classroom context. One of the goals of education ought to be "the creation of a less oppressive, more just, and humane and dignified society." Smyth (1989) p. 4

Critical reflection is a way in which teachers might take back the classroom from the bureaucrats. It is a way to make education relevant to the world outside the classroom, and to confront the multiplicity of issues inside the classroom. Specifically, teaching is political. Every act within the classroom involves power relationships, and the ethical decisions associated with those relationships. It is imperative that we have a clear understanding

of what we are transmitting to our students, what we wish to be transmitting to them, and how we are arriving at these conclusions. "To be a teacher is to reshape our values as continuously as we are reshaped by the newness of this changing world." Huebner (1984) p. 20

Ethical considerations are based on an internal way of knowing. They come from the body's sense. They are felt and understood physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. Ethics do not have a hierarchical structure. All stances are given equal value though not necessarily given equal credibility or acceptance. The ethical stance recognizes each voice as having validity in its beliefs, while at the same time allowing for a questioning of those beliefs. The ethical stance de-centers authority. This does not mean that it is relativist; rather, it means that the ethical position gives value to other stances, recognizes where they come from, and attempts to understand why they exist. It respects the person and their view point but it does not necessarily accept it as being good or just. The ethical stance is a grounded stance. It is arrived at through reflection. It is a position taken not a position given. Unlike the moral stance, it recognizes that many positions may be good and just, rather than believing in the possibility of only one valid position. Unlike the relativist position, the ethical position understands that some stances are destructive. Ethical behavior is behavior that arrives at; it is a determination as to the benefits or detrimental effects of an action or belief through reflection and dialogue.

Ethical behavior is like the internal Self; it is fluid and is malleable because it is formed through this process of experience-reflection-dialogue-action. Ethical behavior situates itself in the space between the Self and the Other. Ethical behavior is an acknowledgment of the Other's needs, and it creates an atmosphere where students are not afraid to articulate these

needs. It is also a body reading of the students, the recognition of the image of me, the teacher reflected in them.

Ethical thought is more a state of questioning than a state of answering, and it does not attempt to force its conclusions on others. Rather, it attempts through critical reflection and a dialogue of mutual understanding to arrive at a an understanding which does allow for the most good to occur within a specific situation.

Ethical choices cannot be made based on some simple religious or ideological treaties; consequences must be measured. The understanding of these consequences is a felt understanding as much or more than it is a reasoned understanding. These consequences must be seen from the point of view of both the Self and of the Other, and each must be equally valued. Ethical questions for the compassionate being are based on what action (word or deed) will cause the most good to all those affected by that action. The needs of the bodies, the minds, the emotions, the spirits, and the social existence of the Self and the Others(s) must be balanced out. This puts the person(s) at the center of the issue. To live an ethical life is to be aware.

Assumptions

The circular relationship between ethics and critical reflection seems evident. We reflect upon the world critically to develop an ethical stance from which to act. We interpret what it is we wish to reflect upon from our ethical stance. Our interpretations of the world, when seen in tandem with others along with our reflections on the gaps between these interpretations, may lead us to reconstruct our ethical stance. This will lead to a

reinterpretation of our original interpretation and new insights from a critical reflection upon this new interpretation.

> "When action flows from assumptions, it is imperative that such action be checked and re-checked. Through this process, assumptions may be strengthened in term of their validity, or abandoned as unworkable, inappropriate, or downright faulty. This kind of checking and re-checking, this thoughtful and highly astute method of gathering observational data, is the hallmark of the reflective practitioner." Wassermann (1988) p. 20

Too often, assumptions are arrived at without question. Actions and the consequences of those actions are not seen as ways of questioning the assumptions themselves, but are seen under the light of the stance we have adopted. Failures or poor results are viewed as being the fault of students or the system, not the fault of the teacher or their original set of assumptions, not the fault of the instructor's "verified truth." The assumption is made that what teachers wants for students is without question, just and valid. Many teachers assume that the way they teach is the best way to achieve what they have assumed is best for the students. They never question either their methods or their motives. Even when acting in the best of faith, believing that our motives are student driven: honest reflection upon the consequences of our actions and dialogue with our students, may prove otherwise. It is difficult to separate our conscious constructions of ourselves and our understanding of our motives from the unconscious forces that distort how we interpret our world. To be truly reflective is to separate what is assumed to be occurring from what in actuality is occurring. The possibility for negative teaching practices based upon assumptions rather than on a constant critical evaluation of actions and events, was made very clear to me by one of my

students. This incident demonstrated how a lack of awareness brought about by the making of certain assumptions, can cause teachers to misinterpret what is occurring in the classroom.

One of my teaching techniques was to use the work of certain students as examples of the 'correct' solution to problems. This technique had been used by my instructors and had produced good results for them and for me. My intention was to give students a visual referent to work from to allow them to 'better' resolve their work in the way that I had intended. It went a long way in helping the class to produce work of a similar quality and it gave students a goal to work towards. I was totally unaware of the hidden ideas and concerns that were being communicated by me to my students until one day a rather outspoken student decided to inform me.

She told me that by holding the 'best' student's work up as an example made the other students feel inferior. It made them devalue their own work and lowered some of their commitment because they felt that they must always be in competition with the 'best' student. It taught them that even though I said I wanted twenty solutions to the problem it was obvious that I had a goal in mind, and those solutions that best fit that goal were seen as the best. It denied the students' own sensibilities and encouraged them to become something other than what they wished to be. This was hard for me to believe and at the moment of telling I resisted accepting what she said. Through this student I began to see myself differently from my own perceived construction of my self. I had convinced myself that my intentions were honorable and in the best interests of my students. Looking into the mirror that was my student, I was forced to confront what was occurring.

After resisting for a few days any suggestion that I was less than I should be as a teacher, I began to reflect upon my teaching practices. I realized that I was ignoring difference. I was encouraging a commonalty or uniformity in my students. I knew this was something I did not believe in, so why was I doing this? Part of my motivation was to have my students succeed within the institution. I was socializing them, rather than creating within them a critical response to the culture. This practice also gave some students the notion that I had 'favorite' students, students whom I liked more than others. This was not true, but the impression of favoritism occasionally caused some unnecessary stress in the social structure of the class. There was, I discovered, an even a darker, though unconscious, motivation to my actions.

A classroom of competent students made my chances of re-employment better and gave me power over the other sessionals with whom I was in competition. It also setup a power structure within the class and gave me an easy validation for my grades. By forcing students to conform to universals, it was easy to rank them according to how closely they matched the ideal, rather than how inventive and creative they had attempted to be. When the students conformed to my ideals they gave validation to those ideals and thus to me. I dialogued with my students, reflecting upon what they were and how they perceived me and what I desired for them. I reflected upon my desired self, what I wished to accomplish, and what I thought art and teaching should be. I began to realize that I had not been all that I could be. I was not like my public school teachers, but I was nonetheless subtly sending messages of power and control to my students that went against what I consciously believed to be acceptable.

In this situation, the needs and motivations of my various selves were in conflict. My teacher/student self wanted what was best for my students; I had constructed myself as a caring teacher who used visuals as a way of helping my students to understand the problems at hand in order to offer solutions. However, I was unaware of the influence of my teacher/institution self, who was concerned with being employed, making myself look good through the work of my students. My teacher/colleague self had a similar goal. I wanted to be a better teacher than the other sessionals, because this would improve my standing among both the full time staff and the students. What is most important, I was unaware of how these unconscious concerns were influencing my actions. What was lost in this situation was my sense of the other selves of the students. Their need for caring, their need for fostering a positive sense of self and their need for recognition for who they were, their sense of difference. Prior to the student's informing me of her interpretation of the event, I had constructed my own interpretation of my action based upon my construction of myself as a selfless dedicated teacher, and I had completely ignored my other selves and their needs in my interpretation. Through the telling of her story, her interpretation of the event, my student induced me to re-tell, re-interpret my own teaching story from a new perspective. Not only did I need to come to a clearer understanding of my students needs, I needed to reevaluate my own needs, wants and interests. I needed to understand what it meant to me to be a caring teacher. I realized that to be a loving teacher I needed to hear and understand what my students where saying to me not just through words but deeds as well. Simply to use language to describe a way of being that I wished for was not going to be enough.

This event has had a major significance in my life as it was a sign post for change. It points out the importance of seeing actions clearly. I realized how one's perception of one's self could cloud the way in which an event is interpreted. A fuller awareness of what is occurring is essential to my becoming a compassionate being. Awareness helps to determine how this compassion should manifest itself. Without the Other as a mirror, it is too easy to see and hear what I wished to see and hear, rather than what was being seen and heard by others.

Caring, then, requires dialogue. Usually this dialogue comes in the form of language, but it can also be revealed through facial expressions, touching, and presence. "True dialogue is open;" Witherall and Noddings ((1991) p. 7 there is a free flow of thoughts and ideas expressed in an open, safe environment. Meaning is negotiated through attempts at understanding in which the complexities and failings of language are acknowledged and dealt with.

The fullest understanding of an incident is reliant upon creating a composite interpretation that encompasses the individual interpretation of all my selves and the interpretation of the others involved. These interpretations are understood in the context of the language in which they are expressed. Therefore, it is necessary to deconstruct the language used to get at the deeper meaning of what is being said.

The Ethical Ideal

Much of what we unconsciously transmit to others is determined by our personal ethics, as was illustrated in this story. Because I believed that I was acting in the best interest of my students, when I looked at my classroom

culture, I interpreted my actions as being in my students best interests. In other words, I saw what I wanted to see and not what was, in reality, taking place. I needed to develop an ethics that would require me to constantly, critically reflect upon myself and my actions, but what was I to base this ethical stance upon?

To me, ethics means compassion. It is being aware of and valuing difference. To be ethical pedagogical, is to have a deep involvement with students. To maintain a bitter dialectic between the Self and the Other, to view the Other as a threat, or enemy, is to set the scene for disaster, and not only to the students but to the Self. To view the Other with love is to join with the Other in the quest for learning as a joyful experience, and to set the stage for learning experiences that are rewarding and fulfilling.

The power of love is unknown to some teachers; other teachers have been taught that loving is wrong. They have been told that they must maintain a 'professional' distance from their students. This has not been my experience. I have found that the more involved I am with my students, the more they are aware of my concern for their well-being, the more productive they are. In a classroom where there is as little competition as the system will allow, students learn for the love of learning. Being sensitive to their frustration, their personal lives, their emotional states, and physical problems helps me to communicate with each of them in the most appropriate way.

> "Love is never abstract. It does not adhere to the universe or the planet or the nation or the institution or the profession but to the singular sparrow of the street, the lilies of the field,' the least of these my brethren. Love is not, by it's own desire, heroic. It is heroic only when compelled to be. It exists by it s willingness to be anonymous, humble, and unrewarded." Berry (1989) p. 18

Such love includes both the Self and the Other. Self-love becomes not a type of narcissism but a valuing of ones being in the world. It implies an acceptance of the Self as being worthy and as such, is an acknowledgment of personal worth for both Self and Other. This is different from valuing Self as how Self is positioned to the Other. It does not mean that Self is not transformable through critical reflective thought.

Without this valuing of Self , I forfeit my place in the social world. This means that when I value my Self only as it is mirrored by the Other, I allow myself to be confiscated by the Other. I am molded by the Other. The Other controls me and becomes the enemy that attacks from within.

This lack of value towards the inner Self, that which I understand ~Me~ to be, becomes a method of self exclusion from social interaction. When I place my value in the control of others I have disempowered myself. I have no control over my life. The Other determines my worth and my place in the world.

I need to learn how to love my existence in order for me to act ethically. Self-love gives me the courage to follow my own instincts in the classroom. The self confidence that comes along with self love allows me the freedom to love others and to be open to others without fear of confiscation. When I am secure with my personal value, then I can enter into meaningful discussion, I can relinquish power structures, become attuned to others needs without fear. By recognizing the importance of self-love in myself, I understand the importance of self-love for my students. If I wish my students to be open to discussion, interaction, and negotiation, I feel I must help them acquire their own sense of worth, rather than attempt to undermine their faith in themselves.

This ethic of caring is supported by Zeichner and Liston (1989). Reflective practice that is critical, both of the system and of alternatives offers a range of choice. It puts forth the idea that there may be other ways of being that are more balanced, more just, and more equitable to all than the current system. At the same time reflective practice offers a forum in which to review these alternative social systems. In this way, critical reflexivity does not become a process of indoctrination, but rather one of questioning. In order to understand the injustices of our system, it is necessary to ethically reflect on the multiple positionings of ethical choice. In other words, reflection is a discourse that attempts to look at problems from as many sides as possible, to arrive at the greatest possible understanding. Good choices can best be made from a well-informed stance. In this way, teaching becomes more an ethical activity and less a technical skill. An honest and caring teacher will treat their students in an honest and caring manner.

This implies that to be an ethical teacher is to be an ethical person. It is not a hat that I might wear in my classroom because it is politically correct to do; rather, it is a way of life that includes my life as a teacher. How might this state of love and caring be given to students? The most obvious point is that I must treat them in the way I wish them to treat me and each other. I must behave in the manner in which I wish them to behave. I must "do onto others as i would have them do unto themselves" and to me. Much of what students learn is through experience. Students will build much of their model of ethics based upon the ethical responses of teachers and other influential people that they encounter. When they move to a position of power, they will most likely behave in the way that those in power behaved towards them.

Another way in which an ethics of caring can be instilled in students is to focus on their personal character traits and the ramifications of those traits and beliefs. It is in the lived world that students can be brought face to face with their sense of being. Critical reflection is more than just being attune to my interpretations of the students, the classroom and the world it is being attuned to the students' wants and needs. It is being able to hear

> "the voices of young people, not the universal child of the developmental theorist or the methods class. To be attuned to young people signals a pedagogic responsibility for the way they are and for the way we are too. This not the abstracted critical reflection based on universal ideals of justice and emancipation, but of seeing our values and the conditions of our culture as they are embodied in the children in our classrooms." Carson (1991) p. 7

To take this stance is to recognize and value the Other and be open and receptive to the Other's interpretations of the world.

If, as Rorty suggests, the selves of a teacher (and/or a student) exist together and in " an uneasy combination of a number of conflicting (conscious and unconscious) 'quasi persons' composed of 'incompatible systems of belief and desire" Shusterman (1988) p. 341 then how is it possible to construct a personal ethic of love if my various selves experience a range of seemingly unrelated desires. Understanding how the Self has been constructed allows for us to deconstruct ourselves and then reconstruct ourselves using different criteria. Frigga Haug (1983) suggest that our past and our interpretation of that past has a strong effect upon how one formulates one's identity within one's social milieu.

The process of deconstructing the Self raises issues of clarity and judgment. When I reflect upon my internal selves, it may be difficult to know

when I am seeing clearly how I have constructed my Self; I may only see the construction that I wish myself to see? Indeed, since the process of recollection involves more than just sequential recollection of an event but is rather a process of selection and interpretation, it is through the process of narration that a story evolves which gives meaning to the selected elements which have been recalled. Part of this process involves coming to an understanding of the motivation behind such behavior.

One way to understand the motivation behind our actions is to construct an ideal, desired self or in other words, it is to choose the way of being that one most values. For me this has been to become a compassionate being. By constructing a desired view of the Self that is loving and by reflecting upon the type of actions such a desired Self would initiate and then comparing them to my actual actions and thoughts, allows for a critical examination of my motivations. In other words, "am I acting out of compassion or from some other set of motivations?" Again, as shown in the story illustrated on page 73, it was only when I began to compare my desired or idealized construction of my being in the world with my actual actions that I began to understand my true motivations. I had assumed that because I called myself a caring teacher I had always acted in a caring manner. Motivations like ethical ideals must be questioned constantly and reevaluated and reinterpreted.

How do we choose an ideal or desired Self? Noddings (1984) also suggests that the basis for an ideal ethic is found in memory. She comments that she has

> "a picture of those moments in which I was cared for and in which I care, and I may reach toward this memory and guide my conduct by it if I wish to do so... the source of ethical behavior is, the twin

> sentiments - one that feels directly of the other and one that feels for and with at that best self (ideal or desired self) which may accept and sustain the initial feeling rather than reject it." p. 80

In other words, by remembering those times in the past when I was either loved and cared for or I loved and cared for another, and then reflecting upon the consequences of this love, I am guided to act within a certain ethical stance. These reflections upon memories help me to re-remember how it felt to be loved and cared for, and how the safety of this feeling of being loved gave me the courage to act and the security to try. This is important to understand because, as has been already stated, students will remember our actions far more clearly than our words. If the goal is not only to develop an ethic of love for our selves, but to guide students towards this stance of love, and to provide for them an atmosphere of safety and trust, then students must be treated in a loving manner.

To behave ethically is not easy. Again, that conflict between selves often arises to trouble our desired actions. The teacher as care giver, may be in conflict with the teacher as information giver, or disciplinarian, or bureaucrat. For example if I am tired and I want to go home because I have had a long day and one of my former students comes to my class door and says he needs to talk; how should I act?. He is feeling overwhelmed by the second year requirements, his upcoming marriage and his future. He is having trouble sleeping and he feels helpless. I want to go home. What do I do? Max Van Manen suggests that,

> "It would be...wrong to refuse to address the pedagogical responsibility we feel when we are confronted by children in predicaments obviously not of their choosing and undoubtedly constraining their possibilities to become what they might want to be in a humanly desirable world." pp 54-55

By reflecting on each situation as it arises from a stance of love and caring, an individual is allowed choices that will be, for the most part, in the best interests of all involved. This also means that I must recognize the other emotions I feel, for as Noddings (1989) explains

> "when we accept honestly our loves, our innate ferocity, our capacity for hate, we may use all this as information in building the safeguards and alarms that must be part of the ideal. We know better what we must work toward, what we must prevent, and the conditions under which we are lost as the one-caring. Instead of hiding from our natural impulses and pretending that we can achieve goodness through lofty abstractions, we accept what is there - all of it - and use what we have already assessed as good to control that which is not-good." p.100

If I am in a bad mood, or angry about something and too tired to be of help, certain options such as postponing the conversation must be considered. If I am too tired I may be resentful and less receptive to the needs of the students and may inadvertently do more harm than good. In such a case postponement may be the more compassionate act. Noddings (1989) believes that a caring ethic is equally part of the care giver and the one being cared for. The care giver must also be cared for. If the student is more distraught than I am tired I might over look my feelings to address the student's greater need. If I do postpone the meeting I need to understand how the student will interpret the postponement. I want to make it clear to this student that I do care about them and their problem but I am simply unable at the moment to be of help because I am so tired. I must be receptive to their needs.

> "Receptivity involves sharing and reflecting...It involves the kind of close contact that makes personal history valuable." Noddings (1984) p. 122

To have an ethic based on love, and to act upon it, requires an understanding of the classroom culture in which such interactions take place. Here both past memories and current activities inform and re-inform me. It is from within the classroom that my thoughts and beliefs about ethics, love, self, and art come to life.

So far, much of this dissertation has dealt with a theoretical approach to the ethics of compassionate being. However, it is in the day to day experiences of the classroom that these theoretical notions live or die. Understanding the value of love is almost meaningless if there is no way to apply the love within the context of the teaching experience. Therefore, it is necessary to explore what a compassionate response to teaching might be like.

Chapter Five:

A Pedagogical Response

When examining teacher practice, the traditional approach has been to "step outside" of the experience to understand it objectively. This removes the subject from it's place of being. It is isolated, placed in a laboratory setting and analyzed according to some hypothesis. That which is to be studied, is removed from the lived space with all that that entails and is seen as separate from its place of being.

This intellectualism has no ethical spirituality. Fortunately, in the past half of the decade this view has been changing. Western culture is in some circles beginning to understand the contextuality of and the interconnectiveness of the life process. From my point of view in my efforts to become a compassionate teacher, I am a part of the experience and I understand it from a deep subjectivity. Researchers observe and speak about what is being studied, I enter into the place where that which is being studied is it's own expression. That is, by being part of the subject I understand it. Understanding comes from an examination of and a deep empathy with, the situation; it is an intuitive understanding. It is a love of life lived. In modern culture, technology is everything and humanness has been taken a step backward. In many senses this is the crisis of the twentieth century and twentieth century education. The human being has become a biological machine. Emotional, spiritual and social needs are not the primary aspects of emphasis in education. Cognition comes first, emotional life second. Consequently, there is a crisis emerging from the gulf between the needs of the students and the demands of the system. Our lives have

become geared to accomplishment; the motivation is achievement, money, and the power it brings. It is not for love. Our sense of worth has become external rather than internalized, and it is upon this externalized sense of worth that we measure others as well. In contrast. studio art, -in my case painting- offers another door to examine my concerns on ethics, reflection, etc.

My studio work and the reflections upon those paintings that I and others do, has greatly influenced the way in which I understand my world and my construction of myself. The methods I use to discover the meaning of my paintings and thus my understanding of my Self in the studio are the same methods that I use in the classroom to discover the meanings hidden there. Painting is for me an internal process of self-discovery. In my studio I learn about my own commitment to art, to life, and to my self. I discover my sense of my own ideal as a painter and this ideal is reflected in my other selves. In this chapter therefore, I reflect on my painting process, and how this impacts on my constructing a studio community in a "caring way."

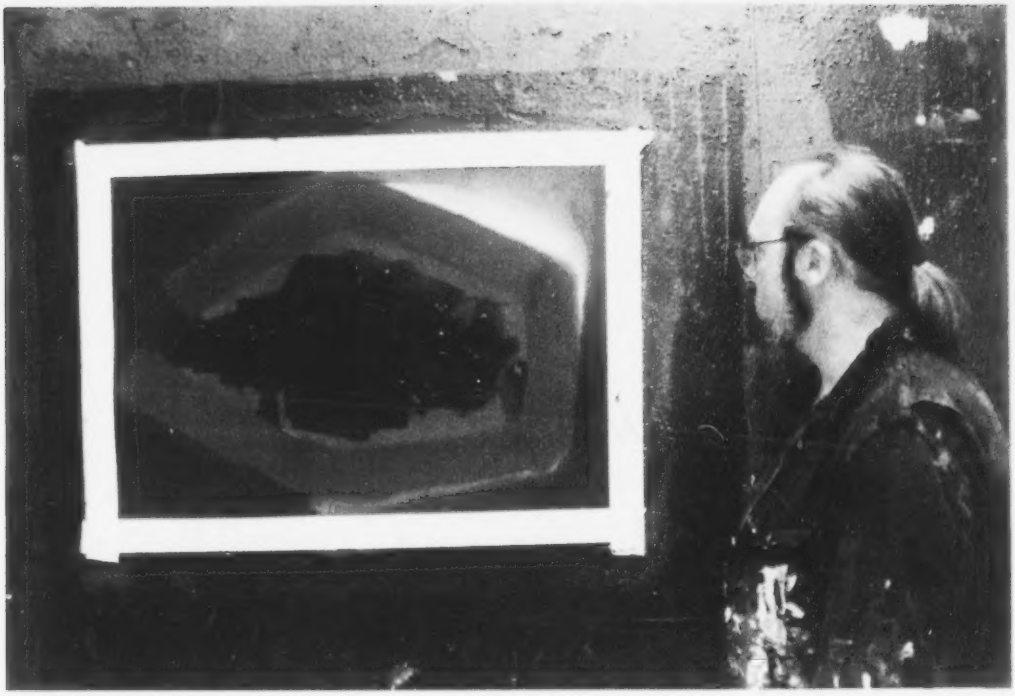
Painting as Meditation and Reflection

For me, painting is a ritual. At home, I listen to music and I play meditation tapes. When I arrive at the studio it is early in the morning. Before I paint a picture, I spend some quiet time at the studio, just meditating. I contemplate the philosophical and visual direction in which the paintings are going. At the same time I think about my life and the things that have happened to me. I play no music. In fact the studio is completely silent. I change my clothes. I begin by rolling out some canvas until it *feels* like the right amount.

Then I cut the piece out and mount it on a black wall, orienting it either vertically or horizontally, which ever *feels* right. Next I begin to sense the first color.

As I begin to paint, much of the original structure is changed. As the colors begin to layer, the painting takes on its own form.

Every now and then, I reaffirm parts of the structure that seem to be necessary to the work. By the time the picture is completed and I step back, its finished appearance and *'feel'* is a surprise to me. Although the basic structure usually remains (though in a modified way), the painting has taken many unpredicted turns and has arrived at itself through a process of metamorphosis. It has informed me as much as I have informed it.



I paint the painting from within. I am in the painting coming to understanding of it as a part of the painting process. In this inside mode "I" the painter, the paint, the tools, the canvas, are one, moving together, finding the way for this painting to come into being. It is a journey leading the painting and me towards an understanding of the moment. When "I" the painting/painter reaches this moment of understanding, the painting is finished and "I" the painter am ready to begin again. Inside another painting "I" the painter begin the journey again. When the painting-painter again reaches resolution it will be new and different from the last experience. Each understanding reflected upon, transforms the painting, the journey, and me. The painting reflects the moment of its completion; the first gaze must then necessarily see this moment as past. It exists no longer in the present. I have already moved to another place. There is a continuity between the paintings, however. This continuity arises from intent. Each painting is an attempt to portray the sense of being that I hold at the moment

of the painting of the picture. Continuity also arises out of a love for color, for paint, and most importantly for the process of painting. This process is for me parallel to the life process. I enter into this process with interests and goals, and I enter into it with love and this process gives to me, undeniable joy, a joy that knows no justifications and no boundaries. This joy is, for me, also present in teaching and it is the joy I hope for as I experience all of life. This is painting from inside the painting.

Painting from outside the painting is quite different. The painter stands back and imposes an external language upon the painting. The journey is complete before the painting is begun. All that is left is to make the journey, to make the painting. Here, there can be no transformation, no unexpected discoveries; the painting follows a set of laws. Its goal is to reflect that which is, not that which might be. It is easy to understand because we have seen it before. It is a reflection of the will of the painter. It is the painter's beliefs made visible, not questioned or discovered. The painter, outside the painting, does not allow the painting to question. Painting from the outside, the painter recreates the painter as the painter is, not as the painter might be. Unlike the painter who is inside the painting, the painter outside leaves only a trace of intellect, but no spirit, no emotion or humane connection. The painting is about itself, not the painter, nor the spirit, nor life itself. It exists as an abstraction of an abstraction.

Just as in the painting process, I can choose to teach from the inside or the outside. When teaching from the inside, I am the learner. The classroom, the students, the subject, and I, are all one, moving to a moment of awareness or many moments of awareness that occur simultaneously with the journey. The skills learned and used are neither the journey nor the awareness; they are the tools just as brushes are the painter's tools. The

awareness comes when understanding is found within. The subject is understood from within and this understanding transforms the students and me. The students are understood from within, which transforms the students and me. I understand from within which transforms the students and me. Learning is understood from within; life is understood from within. The moment of awareness reveals the world at that moment. It is the end of a journey and it is the beginning. The end reveals the why of the present and allows for the possibilities of the future.

Changed, the students and I begin again, but we are different. As we reflect upon what has occurred in the moment that is past, we are transformed. We have a new understanding; a key to open doors that never existed before that moment. Reflection upon what has been directs which door(s) will be opened, which new journey should be pursued. Teaching from within; expands the possibilities and allows for constant and fluid transformations of Self. This is teaching from within.

My understanding of the process of transformation which exists when living in the situation, comes through an understanding of what occurs in my studio. It is an analogous process. With each painting, I strive to come closer to expressing that which I most wish to express. But each painting also informs me spiritually, intellectually and emotionally and influences that which I wish express most. All the other experiences that I, the painter, have outside my studio, also reshape that which I most wish to express. As can be seen the "wish" changes, it is influence by history.

Teaching from without is different. Standing apart, the teacher imposes his/her will upon the class. What is to be learned is already known. It is only the journey that must be taken. Nothing new is revealed because nothing is seen. The goal blinds the teacher to the learning.

Possibilities are hidden to the learners by the goal that is set and clearly defined. Time and conviction lead to an inevitable conclusion, a conclusion that reinforces what is known. It does not question or present other ways of knowing or other things known. Teaching from without, the teacher is separate from the learners. The teacher makes no journey; the teacher leads down a well-trodden road and ignores the life around the road taken as well as the other roads possible The focus is on the goal, not the experience of walking down the road. Like a painter painting from the outside, the teacher sees only the end which is already known. Transformation neither occurs nor is desired, and reflection is unnecessary. There is no joy, no participation in the process and no discovery. Awareness is not possible. Learning is not possible, there is only a perpetuation of a set of interpretations.

Such a way of learning is external. It is imposed upon the learners. It ignores all but the intellect. To learn is such way requires standardization; it sees the learner as an empty vessel that must be filled. The learning experience is forgettable. The learning has only external meaning. Everything is a means to an end. How can there be joy and love in this separation and tyrannical dictation? Where are the students and their needs?

Teachers can be like painters. They too can be continually reevaluating the being nature of their teaching and how that teaching should be formed, informed and reformed. Each experience within and without the classroom can reshape or reaffirm the teacher and that which is taught.

It is easy to assume that what is intended in the classroom is what is happening in the classroom. Often, however, this is not the case. To understand what is happening in my class, I critically reflect upon the

consequences of my teaching by using my students as a mirror. Do my students learn well the academic ideas that I and the institution feel they must learn? This is perhaps the easiest learning to measure. Their drawings or paintings reflect the skill they have learned. By examining the work they do for me and for other instructors, I can gather a reasonable assessment of the skills they have acquired. It is much harder to judge what they have learned from me concerning ethics, social behavior, self esteem, and responsibility. I must carefully observe their behavior in and out of my class to ascertain these things. Their attitudes towards each other, towards me, towards art and towards their other classes are indicators of what I have impressed upon them. It is my ethical positioning -not what I say, but what I do and what I believe- that will be transferred to the students.

When I paint, I inform the painting from the tradition from which I have come. But at the same time the painting stands outside the tradition, questioning the traditions validity. When the painting challenges the tradition, the painting is informing me and I become the learner.

In a state of subconscious response, I reveal myself to my Self through my responses to the painting of the painting. This informing reveals myself and initiates a transformation so that I am not the me that painted the painting, but one who is observing the me represented in the painting. Through this process I gain an understanding of who I am and who I wish to be. Each reforming of who I am reconstructs who I wish to be. It is a process of reflection-action-interaction-reflection which leads me to successive action and transformation. My action is based on the understanding of how I perceive myself to be how I wish to be and the consequences resulting from how I perceive myself and the possibilities of my becoming.

The "I" who is a teacher is shaped by the same process. I come to my class with a construction of who I am and whom I desire to be. This knowledge shapes the action I take in my class. My class is like a painting, it takes form as I interact with it. As it takes form, it informs me of the direction it wishes to go and my desire for it. As it takes form and I reflect upon it, I am informed and transformed through the experience of my class. This informing leads me to new knowledge about my Self and my desired Self as well as the class structure and my and its desired structure. My self and my students are in the class and it is from within the class that we inform each other of our desires. This interaction causes me to deconstruct and reconstruct my concept of who I am and who I desire to be repeatedly. Because I am the one in "ascribed authority", it is my way of being and my desired way of being that to a large extent controls the shape of the class. Self and way of being are interchangeable in this context.

The environment of my class and other classes that students' experience will have profound influence on their lives and relationships, especially in the areas of power and authority. By allowing for unexpected learning, the teacher learns too. Students, teachers and the process in the class influence and transform all.

In a painting, it is not the subject matter but the way in which it is painted that gives the work of art its meaning. So it is with teaching. The fundamental aspect of the transformational place for me the painter as it is for me the teacher, is functional. It is the living interaction between Self and Other. As a living experience, it is always in a state of change and growth.

For the painter, the painting gains meaning as it reflects the painter's being. This reflection informs the painter who is changed by the experience and consequently is changed by this new awareness. The viewer is transformed by the vision in the painting and views painting differently after experiencing the painting. The painting is the visual manifestation of the transformational place. It is both a statement of the painter as they see themselves and it is a statement of the viewers understanding of the painter. It records the painter's reaction to the viewer's construction of the painter. With each viewing of the painting, the meaning of the painting changes, as does the Others' construction of the painter. Each new painting reflects the transformation of the painter through the experience of painting and viewing. Each new painting changes or confirms the viewers understanding of the world and construction of the painter.

So it is with teaching. "I" as a teacher am constructed by what is reflected by my students in and out of class. Each new reception, each new situation reflects who I am at that moment. Teaching is the back and forth flow of knowledge, ideas, feelings, and ways of being. I begin a lesson, present concepts to the students, which in turn inform the students. The student's understanding of the world is either questioned or confirmed. This is only part of what is learned in the class, however.

My way of being communicates much of what is learned. This learning goes far beyond the subject matter. In classroom situations, students, teachers and the meaning of learning are transformed, changed. Like the painter who does not separate art from life, I as a teacher do not separate life from teaching. Who I am as a teacher, and what kind of world I wish for should be reflected inside my class.

Constructing a Caring Community in the Classroom

Throughout this dissertation, it has been suggested that life can be understood as a series of interactions between the Self and the Other and between the many selves that give form to the Self. The interaction can be either of a conflictual nature or of a cooperative nature. It is the adopted ethic that mediates and often determines the nature of the interaction between selves and between the Self and the Other. It has also been suggested that by re-interpreting memories from an ethical positioning new meanings may be discovered for past behaviors. These new meanings seen in the light of the desired self or ideal self, will help to shape future behaviors. Throughout this dissertation I have shared some of my past memories to illustrate certain points, and it is now time to delve more deeply into my past teaching experiences to reveal more about the nature of this ethic of love and to demonstrate how it can change the structure and quality of classroom life.

My classroom has been that of the post secondary experience. I teach at a large western Canadian University and a large college. I teach painting, drawing and art foundations to a wide variety of students. My classes are composed of an unfixed variation of gender, age, sexual preference, race and ethnic origins. The students come from all economic and social backgrounds and represent a diversity of original and immigrant backgrounds. At the post secondary level, I have been given the freedom to construct my courses and my classroom culture as much as I please in some cases and in others, such as when I worked for the two aforementioned women , I have worked under great restrictions.

Each year, at the beginning of every new semester, I talk to my classes about the importance of cooperation in learning versus competitive learning. I attempt to stress the value of shared ideas and shared discoveries. I make an effort to convey to my students that I will care for them individually and that my goal is to teach them and learn with them; it is not to merely rank them in some hierarchy that reflects only how well they understand how to play the educational system. However, this does not infer that I do not have standards of learning and concepts that I want them to learn. It means that I am open to many kinds of learning and I am open to their questions and interpretations of what is being presented. I have rejected the modernist notion of painting and of teaching.

What the modernists appeared to need to do was to negate or deny those ideas that were in conflict with their own. Modernity attempted to set up universal truths, to live in a hierarchy. Even spirituality has been universalized by most modernist religions with a "one path to salvation" attitude. Modernism embraced the techno-mechanistic construct of the world, which relied on the notion of scientific, objective reality. In painting, the modernist tradition attempted to universalize even the meaning of painting. "PAINTING IS ABOUT PAINTING", in capital letters. Modernist painters strove to remove themselves and their feelings from the work. Painting was constructed as an activity that spoke of the nature of the materials and the act of painting but not the meaning. Greenberg and others attempted to construct a set of criteria which could be universally applied to all art to evaluate its sense of "quality." The criteria were all externally understood, the visually measurable elements; composition, use of materials and mark-making and the techniques of the work and how well they were executed according to the "experts" (who were not painters but

critics and historian) were the criteria used to judge the "worth" of a work of art. The felt meaning, the power of its emotivness was not seen as an important criterion. The results of this stance was some powerful work but t also encouraged a sameness to the work. This sameness produced a lack of dialogue, a lack of questioning which eventually led to staleness and repetition. The artist's presence was, in many cases, lost to the technical expertise of the work. Modernist work from the latter part of this century has often been without substance and spiritual or emotive meaning; it has often been without ethics. It exists as a tribute to the materials it was made from and the technical prowess of the artist, but it gives nothing to me spiritually, emotionally, or physically. It does not inform me of the world but rather hides the world behind a wall of dazzling technological flash.

Teaching which is modernist in concept is in danger of the same faults. Teaching which emphasizes technique without meaning denies the learners full self and the lives they will lead. It often hides the true intent of such teaching; the intent to socialize people to 'fit in' to specific places in the social structure. Noddings, (1984) among others have rejected this notion of school as perpetuator of the status quo.

> "Rationality as "trained intelligence" is not the constant and guiding aim of education, but that does not mean that it is not at all an aim to be valued. It means that rationality, while important and prized, must serve something higher...The primary aim of every educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring." p. 172

This notion of caring, of respecting difference, of peaceful and opening interaction with the other, requires fundamental changes in thinking. One

of the most dramatic changes I would like to see made is the rejection of the term failure.

Failure is part of any philosophical stance that has as its basis the notion that there is only one true way. The idea of failure carries with it the power to destroy self esteem, and to impose upon others the will of those in power. This is not to say that there are not things that need to be learned, but it is saying that there are many roads to travel, many ways to learn. Some roads might get you to your destination faster than others but you might not learn as much along the journey. Each of us must choose our way. It is important to consider what is being learned and the importance of that learning over other possible things to be leaned. Roads that do not lead us to a better understanding of that which we wish to understand might point out the way we should go. They might teach us other things that may be as or more important than that which we desire to learn. It is only by having the courage to explore many roads that we will become open to those leanings that may be hidden to us. Matisse's drawings, such as "Lydia" 1937 executed in charcoal on paper, is a visual record of an artist exploring many lines and compositions until he finds the lines that best express his interpretation of the nude in question. Viewing the drawing we see the artist's tentative explorations and rejections of those explorations until the most appropriate lines are found. What emerges is a visual representation of the artists approach to finding that which he seeks, a certain felt understanding of the female nude. Matisse, in setting out to make this drawing, did not have a final solution in mind; he allowed the process to reveal the solution; in this way he was free to also find himself in the revealing of the solution.

I was discussing this notion of abandoning the word failure as a destructive word with a junior/senior high school science teacher. He felt that by not using the word failure I was just avoiding the issue. For him, no matter what word was used the student had still failed and that student would eventually have to face those failures. For me, the discussion pointed out the need for an awareness of the many implicit or hidden meanings that words like failure have in our society. The word failure suggests a lack of something in the student. It also suggests that the experience was a waste of time and nothing could be learned from it. It implies that the student must stay within the boundaries set up by the teacher, the institution and society; it then, restricts risk taking and creative exploration. The use of the word failure, and the implications of the word, tend to negate the caring, creative atmosphere that I as teacher striving for compassion, am trying to create. As a teacher, one can create projects that will have in them a great possibility for "failure". Such projects are usually restrictive in nature, denying the differences among students inherent in any classroom.

For many years I gave a project that required students to work on dark gray paper with white conte. In these projects they would work from a still life, attempting to reproduce the sense of light and form with a repetitive mark. When executed in the manner in which I had intended the image had much the same appearance as an impressionist painting except that this image was in gray and white. This impressionist result relied upon a strict use of a certain type of mark in a very restricted manner. It was a project steeped in modernist structure. Every year a majority of the students would execute the drawing in the prescribed manner and achieve the results that I desired. Those few who could not seem to use the white conte in the way I

desired did not achieve the desired effect and thus did poorly on the project; they "failed" to acquire the necessary technical skills. Because of the restrictiveness placed upon the way the conte was used, the successful drawings all looked as though they were done by the same person, except for the variations of composition that was as much a result of positioning in the room as it was personal choice. The project was easy to grade because the restrictions were so well defined. As the years went by, I began to be bothered by the sameness of the results I was getting, regardless of the sensibilities of the students. I decided to re-evaluate the restrictions placed on the project and only keep those that I deemed essential to the basic intent of the project. This intent was to create a sense of form, light and space through the use of contrast where in the darkness of the paper was the constant and the highlights were manipulated.

With the opening up of the perimeters of the project the results blossomed into a myriad of solutions. Students became more inventive, more exploratory and more enthusiastic. They became aware of the possibilities both appropriate and inappropriate to the project. They solved the problems laid out for them in unique and exciting ways. When we as a class viewed the entire body of work, we saw a range of solutions. The possibility for second-hand learning -learning from each other- increased dramatically; the students' chances of "failing" the project dropped significantly. This made grading much more difficult, because each drawing had to be judged on its own merits, rather than according to an unnegotiated set of standards. This is not to say that anything would be accepted, the drawing still had to demonstrate an understanding of certain concepts, however, the way in which this understanding was demonstrated

was up to each student. Each drawing had its own personality, which was a reflection of the sensibilities of the student, and no longer a reflection of my personal tastes. There was a new excitement in the class as we looked at the results; it was an excitement over the quality of the work, and more importantly, it was an excitement over the variations and possibilities for resolution inherent in the project. It was an acknowledgment of the idea that there was no one solution and that while some solutions addressed the problems set out better than others, there were many solutions that were equally successful. In addition, by allowing students to rework or re-do the drawing if the drawing did not successfully address the problem or if the drawing was not satisfying to the student, the students learned that the less successful drawings were not "failures," but merely steps towards a successful resolution. Even the students whose drawings had not fully addressed the project's intents were more eager to attempt the next project. They began to develop a sense of adventure, experimentation and self exploration. They began to value their own work more and to judge it on its own merits, rather than in terms of how it compared to their classmates work.

The changes that I made to the project made me more aware of the students' individual differences. These changes brought me into closer contact with each student and their individual sensibilities. Not every project has the same scope for such freedom, but it is important to remember that even in projects where there is little room for individual interpretation, such a a line weight project for example, the students' individual characteristics cannot be ignored.

This event was important for me because I learned that I could achieve goals that were important to me by focusing on the needs of my

students. As the students began to fulfill their own creative needs, they also began to see the value of learning techniques and artistic philosophies. Their greater commitment to the projects created a more in-depth exploration of ideas than I could have imagined possible. The students became more aware of themselves, who they were, what really fascinated them as artists. I learned a little about my conflicts with power and control. Some of my initial uncomfortablness with giving them freedom taught me about my own fear of uncontrolled events. I became aware that I had been holding myself back artistically and otherwise because I was somewhat afraid of taking the risks I so wanted my students to take. By allowing them more freedom, I also allowed myself more freedom and have grown as an artist and a person. This recognition of difference is part of an acceptance of the notion that, when a student comes to class they bring their whole being to class including the beliefs that they hold. As Noddings (1984) explains caring teachers address these beliefs in a questioning manner, rather than in a dictatorial way.

> "When a teacher asks a question in class (gives an assignment) and a student responds, she receives not just the 'response' but the student...what he says matters whether it is right or wrong, and she probes gently for clarification, interpretation, contribution....the student is infinitely more important than the subject matter.... the one-caring as teacher is not necessarily permissive. She does not abstain...from leading the student, or persuading him, or coaxing him towards an examination of school subjects." p. 176

What the compassionate teacher attempts to do as a teacher is to balance his or her own needs, those of their students and those institution which represents (or at least claims to represent) the needs of the larger social fabric. In doing so, the compassionate teacher does not force students to

accept the status quo, but encourages them to question what has been established as correct. In this way, those ideas that still seem to be workable are kept, while those ideas that no longer resonate are and can be rejected. This is done in an atmosphere of love; love of Self whether this the teacher or students.

> "The teacher works with the student. He becomes her apprentice and gradually assumes greater responsibility in the tasks they undertake. This working together.... produces both joy in the relation and increasing competence in the cared-for." Noddings (1984) p. 178

Such an approach to learning, one that values each student individually, requires that each student be allowed to find their own way through the learning. The following experience that I had, demonstrated to me the value of allowing students to find their own way to solve problems with just a little guidance from the teacher.

When I teach figure drawing, one of the projects I often use is to have the students draw quick ink gesture drawings. Gesture drawing is an attempt to capture the essence of the pose taken by the model without undo care over perfect proportions. To help students to break from a natural tendency to "tightness" I give the students two foot sticks to which they attach brushes. This distances the students from the paper and requires them to use more of their arm to create the drawing. The use of the arm versus the wrist is necessary in the creation of gestures. What several of my students discovered and what was also a discovery for me was that for them their proportions got better when they no longer had as much control. These students then wished to begin all their drawings from this quick gestural start. Though I had not planned such a revelation, I of course, gave them

permission to do so. These students were students who had struggled with life drawing until this moment. We had both discovered a new concept which had freed them from some internal restrictions.

Through the exploration of ways of drawing, these students had found a method to which they relate. As they became more proficient, their level of confidence rose and they began to improve in other areas of my course. They also became more committed and worked harder. Their awareness of more possibilities in the ways to draw allowed them greater freedom of choice and a greater ability to personalize the process of the drawing.

Cooperative ventures in learning such as these are possible because I first have recognized the needs of my various selves and the found compromises between them. Finding a balance between the "I" who teaches the skills demanded by the institution, the "I" who wishes to care for my students needs and the "I" who is an artist and wishes to communicate what that means to my students is not, however, the only set of interactions taking place. The teacher self that I am also has to be balanced with the "I" of each student. It is the interaction of the Self of the teacher with the Other of the student in an atmosphere of love and caring that allows for the full growth potential of each student.

As this dissertation has journeyed through the complex notion of compassionate teaching, certain themes have begun to emerge for me. To me these themes are key elements in my own understanding of what it means to be a caring practitioner. The following chapters reveal and explore themes of teaching as I have come to understand it in my investigation of compassionate teaching.

Chapter Six:

Emerging Themes of Compassionate Teaching

Teacher as Parent

Teachers often take on a role that is not at first obviously a teaching role but is nonetheless one of great importance. This role is that of "teaching as standing *in loco parentis*." Van Manen (1991) p. 21 This loving of students as our own children suggests that being a teacher reaches far beyond the classroom and beyond that time when you have that student in your class. It carries a lifetime of responsibility. It also implies that the teacher as parent will be confronted with students' personal issues that are not part of the official curriculum. Many students come from homes where love is either non-existent, or where there seems no time for love to be given. Students often need an older adult to talk to, but it must be someone they feel they can trust. This trust comes about when students feel that they are cared for and that the teacher will guide them the best they can because of this caring. This is true even within the classroom; students who feel that the teacher cares for them are more willing to accept criticism and direction if they believe their teacher is acting in the best interest of the students. My experiences while teaching a boy named Stephen, taught me the value of teachers being a parental substitute to their students.

One year I was teaching an introductory drawing class to a group of Fiber arts students. The class was composed entirely of females with one exception, Stephen. Stephen was a young man who demonstrated much drawing ability, but seemed to lack the appropriate

drive. At the beginning of the course, he would often hand in work that was not up to his abilities. His presentation was often sloppy and uncaring. In my discussions with Stephen, he revealed to me that no one had ever cared whether he did well. His parents seemed disinterested, his public school teachers had more or less written him off and even his other current instructors had intimated that it might be better if he withdrew from the program. I informed him that I had faith in him and I did not intend to let him settle for less than the best that he could be. For the entire first half of the year I paid close attention to him, making him redo any project that was not up to his capabilities. We had several talks about responsibility, lifestyles, and priorities. Whenever Stephen did well I would praise and encourage him. I made it clear to him that not only did I believe in him, I wanted him to succeed. I cared about him not just as a student but as a person. We spent much time attempting to discover his actual artistic interests.

By the end of the first term Stephen was doing extremely well. He came to me one day and told me that it was my concern for him that turned him around. For the rest of the year Stephen did well remaining always in the top 10% of the class. Stephen came to realize that his interest lay in animation rather than in fabric design, so I encouraged him to move to a college that offered the type of animation he was interested in. I helped him to prepare a portfolio and I wrote him a strong letter of recommendation. I told Stephen that I expected him to live up to this letter and that he was not to let himself or me down by returning to his former behavior. Several years later, I ran into Stephen again. He had changed colleges and was pursuing his interests in computer animation. He was still at the top of his class and was

nearing graduation. Before going his way Stephen told me that his success, indeed his personal happiness, was because of me and the interest I had taken in his personal welfare. It was not so much the drawing skills that I had taught him as it was the sense of personal worth that I had given him which enabled him to pursue his goals successfully. Stephen had done well because he had developed good drawing skills and good work habits, but this was only possible because Stephen had learned to believe in himself and because he had someone else who believed in him.

I used no special theoretically developed techniques on Stephen; I simply cared for him and his well being and responding with love and concern to his presence in my class, and I did so without neglecting or withholding that love and caring from my other students. Stephen was not valued more than my other students, but he was made aware that he was equally valued, something that he had not experienced in any great abundance up to that point. I expressed my concerns for his future well being just as a parent would. I cared about what he wanted and I was there for him when he needed someone to talk to and when he needed someone to guide him.

This event pointed out to me how important it is to react to students as though they were your children. By giving Steven love, encouragement and expectations, I helped him to realize that -like a parent- I valued him and cared about his future well being. He realized that my intent for him was for him to realize his own goals and potentials. Stephen needed direction in his life; he needed someone to help him make decisions about his future and as a surrogate father figure he turned to me for this help. As many students do not receive the support of their parents (this seems especially true of art

students) they crave criticism and validation of their choices. They seem to need to know that someone else respects these choices and is willing to help them to succeed in fulfilling their dreams. They also want to be reassured that someone is there if they falter, someone who can help them through the tough times. They want that feeling that even if things do not work someone cares for them unconditionally.

Currently I am giving a lot attention to a young man who is having difficulties with another instructor whom he has a crush on. This young man is very shy and it was very painful for him to confide in me, but he eventually revealed many sad things about his life and his relationship to his parents. I can not reveal the details of our conversation or our conclusion because he and I agreed that our conversations would remain confidential and even though his story would add to this dissertation, my promise to him must be kept. What can be said is that this young man had no one to turn to; he saw my relationship with other students and went to them in tears asking them how he might develop such a relationship. Because of my relationship with these other students he saw some hope for the kind of help that he needed. The way in which I interacted with my other students made him feel safe to reveal problems he otherwise could not have revealed. He came to me not as a student to a teacher but more as a son to a father.

When a student is no longer a student

Being there for your students goes beyond the time when that person is a student. I am currently helping three students who are struggling with depression and anxiety over their school work. None of these students are in my classes this year though they were all students of mine at one time. I

also have had former students over to the house, helping them write curriculum vitas, job applications, grant applications. Sometimes they come over because they need to talk about family or girl/boy friend problems, and sometimes they just want some parental type company because they do not have any at home. I visit my students' studios often and do what I can to get them into shows or galleries.

This support can require a financial commitment. I am currently buying one of my students drawing supplies because he has no money to buy them himself. I have done this several times over the years, loaning or sometimes giving students money for materials, food and other necessities. I remember when I was a student and ran out of money and one of my professors gave me ten dollars for food. I spent it on art supplies, and my friends took turns feeding me. My best friend has fed, clothed and sheltered me over the years and I remember feeling a kind of safety knowing that while I was broke I had friends and instructors who cared enough to make sure I survived. I hope to pass this on to my students so that they in turn will help others if they are able to do so. Hopefully their memories of my kindnesses will help them to develop their own ethic of love.

When one has been a father figure to someone for a year or more, the relationship cannot end just because the formal relationship ends. Continuity is an important aspect of life and it is helpful for young people to be able to continue to confide and seek help from those who were beneficial to them while they were in school. Having this continuity embodied in a teacher or teachers allows for a smoother transition from student hood to full adulthood. The feelings of abandonment and isolation are reduced because the teacher offers a link between the past and future through their continued actions in the present. Just as sense of valuing and

caring can have positive effects, when teachers demonstrate a lack of care and love the effects can be devastating.

When the Caring is Missing

One day, as I was having coffee alone at the University where I teach, a young native woman sat down at my table. She was now attending university but had previously attended the college where I also work. I had never taught this student at either institution. She began to talk about her experiences at the college. She had been in a different program from the one in which I worked, but she knew that I had previously taught in that program and had been forced out by her former instructor. She began to tell how she had been treated. The head of this program was a feminist who did not have a reputation for dealing well with men. She would not tolerate any negative comments about women, but would often make such statements about men. This did not mean that she treated women fairly or justly. This student told me that her instructor had told her that she was no good as a visual artist. She should give up painting and become a feminist art historian. The instructor also belittled and eventually refused to allow the girl to use native symbology in her work. During a class critique of the young woman's' work, this instructor allowed racial slurs to be made by other students, against native people without so much as a word of protest. Upon graduation this young woman was told by her instructor that if she went to university to pursue a painting career, she would fail for sure. Even though this woman was feeling wounded and insecure, she decided to enter the University's Fine Arts Program anyway. At first

she was afraid to acknowledge her native heritage in her work, but as she seemed to be receiving good grades in her chosen courses, she decided to begin to introduce native elements into her work. Surprisingly, she continued to be at or near the top of the class. In her mind she kept wondering why this was so. She told me that rather than experiencing any joy over her successes, she kept dwelling on her sense of failure at college. During this discussion and others, I attempted to explain to her that she was not at fault for her experiences at college. At college she had one instructor that had forced her own political agenda on her; at university she had several instructors who had expressed their confidence in her and she had therefore done well. It was not the student who had failed at college, but the instructor. This student told me that she did not realize this until the end of her first year at university, and she was angry because even though she had a successful year it had been filled with self-doubt concerning her abilities and her heritage.

In this situation the teacher (instructor) missed many pedagogical opportunities because she was only concerned with her own needs, especially her need to be in control. As a teacher as parent, she could have bolstered this young woman's self esteem, improved her sense of pride as a native person, and helped her to obtain her life goals. Instead, she chose to attempt to destroy all of that because the student chose a path different from the one the instructor wished. She also missed the "pedagogical moment" that van Manen (1991) speaks of in The Tact of Teaching. Here was a perfect opportunity to address the concept of prejudice generally and especially as it pertains to Native Canadians. It was the time to stop the class and discuss why racial slurs and negative racial attitudes are

unacceptable. This teacher's blindness to the Other, and her total concern for her own needs, damaged not only this young woman, but left a tacit impression through her lack of action, that these racial attitudes expressed by the other students were indeed acceptable.

The student eventually became aware that this teacher's intent was not to teach her art nor was it to help her to realize her own aspiration, but rather, it was to promote certain political ideals. This teacher was using her art class as a vehicle to convert students to certain ideologies. All her energies were directed towards this goal, without consideration for the students own sense of Self and self awareness.

The real tragedy here is not just this one student's story, but the history of this instructor as an abusive and dictatorial teacher. It is a history of abuse of power to promote personal beliefs. This instructor also showed an extreme lack of awareness of her own intentions and the consequences of actions which are unfair and unethical. I have attended many staff meetings where she has complained of difficulties with her students, but her response was always the same. If the problems were with male students, she explained the problem away as being one of chauvinism or misogyny; if the problems were with female students, she explained them away by saying the student needed to see a councilor. She often sent students to councilors with the suggestion that these students had some mental problems. Even though she had such problems every year, she never looked to herself as being the cause.

Both Stephen and this young woman eventually did well academically. The system saw two success stories, two examples of "successful" teaching. There was however, a great difference concerning the student's experience. Stephen was happy, enjoying a sense of high self esteem and fully enjoying

his educational experience, while the other student, who had almost decided to not to continue, spent a year in fear and self doubt unable to appreciate her successes. Stephen discovered himself, his worth and his genuine academic interests through a process of dialogue and encouragement, while the other student had to fight to maintain her self-esteem and her academic goals, and is still trying to overcome her feelings of anger and bitterness.

Stories such as these have demonstrated to me the power of teaching. Many of my students have related stories in which teachers have hurt, humiliated, or devalued them in some way. These students tell me how they are still struggling to overcome the effects of those experiences. I can understand this fully; I am still being effected by my bad experiences at the college. I am still nervous about giving to my students. When my boss tells me that his students are always praising my class and me, I become nervous that I am about to be fired again. I am extremely sensitive to my co-workers but my fear sometimes makes me misinterpret compliments concerning my teaching ability and my relationship with my students. Knowing this however, makes me even more aware of my "power" as a teacher to affect students lives. I try to be very careful about understanding what I am communicating to my students. It is important for me, to be always attempting to give these students a sense of being valued. Even when the work is poor and their behavior is less than desirable, it is meaningful to insure that they understand that you are concerned for them because you care for them and their well being.

The need for Control

The need to be in control has been, for me, very difficult to overcome. I have always felt that if I did not insist that students arrive on time, finish work in class, and stay until the end of class that I was not going to get the results I wanted. While it is important that students learn that being on time is important in the real work world, what is important in the classroom is that they wish to be there and that they learn all that there is to learn. This may sometimes mean that certain students may have to be allowed to do much of their work other places. Some students simply work better in more isolation or in more familiar surroundings. There are also cases where students may have to miss class for other reasons and this will require that they finish assignments outside the class. For instance, students who live out of town and have never been away from home, may occasionally miss a class so that they can go home to spend some time with their families.

> " Besides engaging the student in dialogue, the teacher also provides a model to support her students as ones-caring, she must show them herself as one-caring...Hence she is not content to enforce rules and may even refuse occasionally to do so but she continually refer the rules to their ground in caring." Noddings (1984) p. 178

This is not meant to imply that I would relax the standards I set for my students. They must fulfill the requirements of the course to the best of their abilities. Sometimes students can fulfill requirements in places other than the classroom. It is important for them to understand the consequences of not fulfilling the requirements, and the possible consequences of missing classes and then allowing them to make the choice. Forcing a child or an adult to

sit in classroom s/he is unhappy in will not further their education. The student need to want to be in the classroom and need to want to learn before learning will take place.

The issues of power and control are perhaps the hardest to balance. There are skills, concepts and philosophies that students need to know to function within the educational system and within society. I have my own beliefs of what is important for them to know as potential artists. These beliefs cannot be abandoned just to avoid the issues of power and control.

The issues of power and control go far beyond my personal needs, my need to feel in charge; by being in control and forcing my ways upon the students, I can perpetuate systems that benefit me. If for instance, in a painting class, I force my students to paint in certain ways or to take certain political or philosophical stances in their work, I can foster in them the same ideals about art that I have chosen. They will then make art as I do and this will be a confirmation of my artistic choices. If you think back to the story about the native woman, it demonstrates how an instructor attempted to enforce certain views on a student while ignoring the needs and aspirations of that student. Here was an issue of control and use of power through grades to attempt to force a student into a mold that did not fit her. It was an attempt to perpetuate and validate certain views held by the instructor, an effort to satisfy her selfish needs which included the need to destroy the needs and desires of her students.

Politically, the state can use education to promote certain social ideas over others. Business people and politician often view education as "the most humane form of social control and the safest method of social renewal." French ((1985) p.383 This maybe why in the last decade, which has been controlled by politicians who favor business and science over the

humanities, there has been a substantial drop in funding for arts education. Our provincial government has actively been attempting to remove the arts from the education process. I believe it is one of the reasons for the high drop out rate. This move to science, math and the rigors of the type of discipline associated with these subjects does not address the personalities of many students. As well, the arts are notorious for there questioning attitudes, not just with art issues but with social and political questions as well. Too little of education "is concerned with learning; most is concerned with achieving...one is dedicated to experience, the other to control." French (1985) p. 387 I do not want such attitudes of hierarchical labeling and achievement orientation whose goal is to be better than someone else, to invade my classes. In my classes, students are encouraged to compete only with themselves. I do not post grades and I do not compare one student's work to another, especially in a hierarchically manner. I discourage those attitudes in my students and encourage them to find solutions to the problems I have set for them in their own personal way. I give my students' chances to set their own goals. The hope is that the classroom is a kind of Anarchy.

> "Anarchy is not the absence of order, but a delicate interaction. Entities exist in their self-organization yet are necessarily connected to other entities;" French (1985) p. 500

Students come and go in my classroom without explanation. They understand that they have work to do and deadlines to meet. They know that the class will move ahead to new ideas even if they choose not to attend. Because they have goals, they rarely miss class or take long breaks,

but they are allowed the choice. I encourage and discuss the consequences with them of their behavior and then leave the choice to them.

This does create a conflict in the "I" who is a teacher concerned with the welfare of his students, the "I" who is a teacher attempting to instill in his students a sense of personal worth reflected in their developing a personal self discipline and personal goal setting and the "I" who is employed to teach certain subjects. It does not look good perhaps to my supervisor, if my class is not always full with my students quietly working at their desks. Yet I have little problem with absenteeism or incomplete portfolios. My students work hard and accomplish much.

Sometimes power and control are used as shields to hide a teacher's ignorance of the subject matter. *When I first started teaching the Visual Communications students, we did a project where in the students drew a floor plan and then turned that floor plan into a two point perspective drawing. I knew nothing about this type of drafting. I, therefore went to some of my colleagues and ask them teach me how to do this type of drawing. I also got a book which was used at a technical school for drafting from a student whom I had confided in. Armed with many visuals, the text book and my new training, I was ready to begin to teach this section of the course. There arose within me a conflict between the "I" who was the "all knowing teacher" and was afraid that my lack of knowledge would cause my students to have a lack of respect for me and the "I" who was the teacher who wanted to be honest and open with my students. Fortunately the second of my "I"s won out. I began the class by telling them I had never taught this before and would probably make some mistakes on the way. I asked if there were any students who might know something about this*

technique. Several students had already done this before and they helped me to teach the project.

Far from losing my student's respect, my act of honesty increased their respect for me. They were more than glad to have their knowledge recognized and they seemed to enjoy helping me. We made many jokes about my lack of knowledge and we struggle together in the areas where no one had enough knowledge. It was a true communal learning experience in which we all benefited. Not only did we all learn how to do the assignment, but we learned how to help each other and to accept each others' weaknesses. In this way, many of the needs of my students and myself were met. We forged a common bond to learn something. By helping each other achieve our goal we all built some self esteem. I became a little more like them and they became a little more like me and our friendship grew stronger.

When someone tries to hide their ignorance behind a display of power and control, the effects can be just the opposite of the above. In my teaching place there is a colleague who appears to disregard the students needs and feelings. He understands his material well. He imparts intellectual knowledge but he ignores the other needs of his students. He rarely or never gives praise or encouragement. He is cruel and sarcastic in his criticisms. He leaves his students feeling inferior and uncared for, yet he is unaware of their feelings toward him. In his mind there exists a positive and meaningful relationship. He simply does not understand the effect he has on them, emotionally and spiritually. He over works them and is unaware of the physical effect this has. Unfortunately, he is not the type of person who can be approached; he is not open to dialogue. He has been told by more than one supervisor, that he is too demanding and

too harsh. He has not changed. He and I teach the same set of students. On more than one occasion they have come to me either angry or hurt.

One year this instructor was asked to teach a subject for which he had little prior knowledge. Like me, he did plenty of research; consulting colleagues and going to the library. Unlike me, he choose to hide from his students his lack of experience in this area. He attempted to disguise his lack of knowledge by hiding behind the use of complicated vocabulary and convoluted ways of explaining various concepts. When students asked questions, he responded in a defensive manner, acting as if his competence was being questioned and not as though the students were seeking clarification for their own benefit. As in my case, he was confronted by a question to which he did not have the answer. In an assignment he had graded a student negatively for altering type as it increased in size. The student insisted that it was correct to do so and this instructor insisted it was not. Instead of going to a book and checking they got into a heated argument which eventually included most of the class. In the end the student produced the book with the explanation in it defending the student's work. The instructor did not apologize and the hurt feelings lasted weeks.

During the argument the teacher in question was aggressive and flaunted his power as an instructor in an attempt to force the students to accept his ruling. He tried to hide his lack of knowledge behind a display of power and control; he lost because he was not honest and because he did not have the respect and caring of his students. By the time of this incident, he had already alienated most of his students.

In this situation, there was a clear conflict between the Self of the teacher and the Other of the students. The teacher was more concerned

with preserving his place of power than he was with giving his students the correct information or providing a caring atmosphere for students to work in. His approach and the consequences of his actions spilled over into my classroom. Often these students would come into my class upset and angry over some action or statement made by this instructor. His lack of sensitivity was a major factor in students' hurt feelings and sense of alienation which then became an issue for the other instructors to deal with.

This instructor was unaware of his effect upon his students, he often talked to me of his good relationship with them. Unfortunately he was not the type of person one could point out this misconception to. To this instructor, his intent in being so harsh and dictatorial was to give his students what they needed to know in a disciplined manner. In reality, this behavior was an attempt to hide an insecurity based on a lack of knowledge of the subject. He feared that his ignorance would be exposed and the students would not respect and fear him, and he would lose control of his class. Unfortunately he could not see the actual consequences of his actions upon his students and he was not willing to listen and to watch them to perceive these consequences. As a result the students were in a state of near revolt of which he was unaware.

The problems with this instructor introduce yet another tension in the school setting. I was caught up in a dilemma. The "I" who cared for my students well being, was angry at this instructor's verbal aggression and his domineering power tactics. I found myself often wondering how I might interject and stop this, but the answer was not clear. He was a married man with a wife and new child. His job was not secure because of many previous student complaints about his attitude. It was a long term problem that had followed him from one institution to another. He was also a

colleague. Many of the students came to me to talk about him, some wanting some guidance in finding ways to either change him or get rid of him. The "I" that was his colleague, his professional colleague, prevented me from speaking my opinion about his teaching methods to these students. I had tried to go to him a couple of years earlier and he had responded aggressively and very loudly, denying his actions toward my students. The tension between my "I" as a caring teacher and my "I" as a professional colleague was never adequately resolved. I attempted to placate my students without giving them the notion that I approved of his actions but without saying negative thing about him. I was there for them to vent upon; they knew that what they said to me would go no further and so they were safe to express their feeling without jeopardizing their school careers. He was not hired back and that stopped that specific conflict.

When colleagues act badly toward students, the caring teacher is put in a great dilemma. In my case, I realized that his actions were not so extreme that the students could not handle him and so I provided only a sounding board for them. If I had felt that the students were being so adversely affected that they and their work were truly suffering, I would have taken appropriate steps to alert our mutual supervisor.

It is still difficult for me to be at ease with a lessening of my power and control over my students. I do not like to "give them up" to other instructors partly because I like to keep them near to me so that I can be there for them, but also partly because I know that they will be influenced in other artistic and perhaps social ways. However, by recognizing this weakness in myself, I am able to overcome it and actual encourage my students to seek out other opinions from other instructors. I am consciously aware of not negating the value of these other opinions merely to reinforce

my hold on my students. Giving up the power and control in obvious ways is easy in comparison to recognizing and dealing with the subtle tacit ways that I can control my students. Because I have their respect and their love, it is important that I encourage them to question me and my beliefs while encouraging them to develop their own through a process of critical reflection. I must be careful not to be too convincing but need to always leave open the door to other possibilities. Awareness is the key.

Troubled Students

Just as there are instructors who seem to need to exert their power to control the way in which their students think and behave, there are also students who seem to have to defy any instructor. These students consistently do not complete assignments and they often refuse to solve the problems set for them. They come to class late and waste the time that they do spend in class. Not only do they do poorly but they often interfere with other students, distracting or annoying them.

The usual manner in which these students are dealt with is to either ignore them, get angry and chastise them or simply fail them out of the program. It has been my experience that most of these students are students with low self esteem who do not really feel that they are worthy of doing well. Their behavior is a misdirected call for help.

Ricky was one such student. He often came to class an hour late and then took a long break leaving him little of the three hour class in which to work. While pleasant to talk with, he seemed not to care about the class at all. By the mid-term he was failing. Instead of just letting him go, I encouraged him and few other like students to come in

on the weekends and rework the assignments that they had done poorly on or to finish those assignments that were not yet complete. Each weekend I stayed and worked with him. I also praised him every time he came to class on time and talked to him often about my concerns for his future. I let him know how much I wanted him to succeed and how valuable I though he was as a person. I explained to him that when he did not do his best he was telling everyone involved that he did not value himself enough. With much encouragement and several weekends worth of work Ricky pulled his grade from an 'F' to a 'B'. This term he is coming on time and he is completing assignments.

Ricky is just one of six such students who are demonstrating a new sense of caring and commitment to the class. Attendance and promptness are no longer a problem and the students are working harder and accomplishing more. However these students still need much attention. I continually praise them for their new behavior and tell them how proud I am of them. I also watch for slides backwards to old habits and talk to them immediately about such slips.

Unfortunately some students can't be reached. Louis came to all the weekend meetings, worked at his assignments and continually promised everything would be completed on time. When it came time to hand in that final portfolio it was sadly incomplete. While he did not fail, his low grades in all his classes were such that he was not allowed to return in the second semester. I spent a great deal of time trying to encourage this young man to take pride in himself and his work. I came in on weekends and I stayed late after class. I tried to be his friend and show how concerned I was for him. He responded well to the attention in a personal way but, did not truly change his ways. Perhaps his home life or his social life was such that he

just could not be motivated. I talk of Louis because firstly it saddens me not to be able to reach someone and help them to achieve and second to demonstrate that some students will be lost no matter what the effort. Nonetheless, it has been my experience that far more students can be saved than are, if the time and care are taken.

So many of my colleagues view students like Louis and Ricky in a negative way. They express anger at them, I think because they think that such students are reflections of them as failed teachers. These students not attempting to be negative mirrors but are usually troubled in some manner. They lack self esteem and self worth. Most students who are doing poorly can be helped to do better. If they can be convinced that any progress is worth note, they begin to judge themselves by personal improvement rather than by comparison to others. Each triumph aids in developing their sense of self worth.

The greatest difficulty in helping these students lies in the grading system. Any system which forces a hierarchical layering of the students automatically attacks the self esteem of the weaker students. It reminds them in a very graphic way that their work is not as good as their classmates. Too often students identify their grades with their personal worth and develop the notion that if their grades are low then their teacher values them less than the more successful students. Grades are misleading in other ways as well. Many students spend their time figuring out what the instructor wants to hear or see and then they provide it. While this does still take ability and understanding it shows a lack of sincerity and actual creativity. It mostly demonstrates a student's abilities to mimic but it does not demonstrate their ability to think critically and creatively. Because grades so often reward students for maintaining the status quo and 'backing up' the

accepted thought (usually the professors' views) grades inhibit risk taking which is one of the backbones of creativity. Students who are dependent on good grades for scholarships, continuation in the program and sometimes jobs in the future, will often settle for what they think is expected of them. They do not feel safe to explore the possibilities because of the fear of failure.

A pass-fail system on the other hand does not rank students except in the simplest of terms. Since in my experience few students fail unless they simply have not done the work, it is a far more equitable system. To make such a system more equitable the notion of failure can be removed and in its place, a simple "held back" system could be installed. In such a system students would remain in a class until they had developed the skills necessary to go on. Student evaluations would consist of written and verbal responses to the students work which highlighted the strengths and the weaknesses of the student. These evaluations would be between the student and the instructor and not shared with others. Such evaluation would put the responsibility for improvement on the student. Once aware of their difficulties it would be up to the student to take the initiative to improve with the help of the instructor. If necessary special sessions after class can be held to address individual problems. The student and the teacher would then become partners in the student's quest for learning.

Of course no system will work unless the instructor is open to the nature of differences. Any system does damage when instructors use the system to promote their own philosophies. In any area where there are divergent opinions it is important that students be allowed to hold their own opinion as long as they can support them. Evaluation should be based on ability to write or to paint or to draw well within and about what the student

believes and understands. This does not exclude the teacher from questioning and even attempting to change the students' beliefs but it does exclude the teacher from grading on personal bias insofar as that is possible.

Evaluation then goes along way in the development of the classroom culture. It can promote the sense of caring and trust that is being developed in other ways or it can negate it. Evaluations that rank students belie the notion that the teacher values each student equally. Evaluations that promote certain views over others negate self expression and experimentation. It is important to distinguish between the quality, how well done a piece is and its philosophical intent. While the philosophical intent is open to debate, such disagreements between students and their instructors should not unduly influence the evaluation lest students stop exploring and questioning and become merely repetitors of the accepted. When this occurs both the students and the teachers lose a valuable learning opportunity. It is through the exchange of contradicting views that new knowledge is created and old knowledge challenged.

There is another type of student who is very difficult to help, that is the student who perceives theirs abilities to be much greater than they are. Such students put themselves above their classmates and feel that they should not have to do the assignments because they are beyond them.

Claude was such a student. She came into my junior level painting class and announced to the class that she really belonged at the graduate level and it was just a mistake that she had been placed at this junior level. Claude refused to do any of the assignments, insisting that she was beyond such menial activities. Her self directed paintings displayed a great many problems and a real lack of understanding of

visual concepts and techniques. Her ego would not allow her to see or here any criticism directed at her work. She believed that she knew more about painting than my assistant or myself and told me that although she had never seen my work she knew she was a better painter than me. Because of her unwillingness to receive any instruction she received low grades. This sent her often to the chair to complain. Even when students were giving complete freedom to produce a painting of their own devising she was unable to see the problems inherent in her work. She felt equal to Mattise and this ego barrier was unpenatratable. My assistant Ed and I tried every thing we could think of to encourage her to try to see and address these problems, but her belief in herself was so great that we could not reach her.

As has already been stated, it is important to understand that not every child or young person can be helped. It would soon burn out a teacher if they grieved too much for every lost student. However that does not mean that teachers quit trying. Caring teachers try even after the student has stopped trying. The awareness comes in knowing that regardless of ever effort made, some students will not be reached. It is sometimes impossible to undo many years of family abuse and hardship in one class. Teachers are not miracle workers. It is not always possible to heal broken hearts, minds and spirits in the short time a teacher has with a student. Given that and all that has been said before it is also important that teachers do not give up on students. When a student expresses a need for help even if they have let you down many times before, it is important to be there for them. To let them know that they are valued and that you will be there to help them when they are ready to be helped. Often if a student is

aware that the intent of the teacher is to help them they will respond in a positive way and begin to change their attitudes.

In the previous story some might speculate that I could have allowed her to do what she wished and not to have followed the curriculum with the rest of her classmates. Caring, however does not always mean being nice. Sometimes the most caring act appears to be the harsh or uncaring act.

Currently there is a student in the painting department who was allowed to circumvent the curriculum. She was told that she was beyond the level in which she was placed and so did not have to learn what the other students were learning. This assessment was based not upon her knowledge but upon the artistic genre she was pursuing. She therefore has not learned how to paint figuratively, she knows nothing of oil paint and she knows nothing of other philosophical ideas other than the one she is currently interested in. This might at first glance appear to be an effort to make school relevant to her needs but the results are much different.

My attempts at forcing Claude to function within the requirements of the curriculum may have seemed harsh and unbending but the results of being too generous and in a sense favoring a student can be disastrous. The most apparent result of this student being exempted from the class activities was the creation of a serious animosity towards her from the rest of the class. She paints in isolation, the rest of the students barely speak to her. If she accidentally splashes paint or in any way appears to infringe upon her classmates' space there is an instant argument. She has no student she can turn to when she is having a problem with her work and needs to talk. The class also feels that their instructor values her more than they. They feel that

he does not respect them, their desires, or their work. As a result there is also a rift between him and they.

This incident happened in an intermediate level painting class in which students are still learning concepts and techniques. This young woman has missed this learning. If in the future she wishes to explore other painting avenues, she will have a much harder time doing that than her classmates because she will not have the basic knowledge that they will have. When she graduates, she may also have a hard time adjusting to the "art world" which will not treat her as "special." Often students who have been given the impression that they are 'gifted" are so demoralized by the realities of the art community that they cease to paint. The rejection and apathy of the art community is hard to take for anyone but it is even harder to take if you have been given the impression that you are a "star." This young woman will not have the benefit of her contemporaries to help share in the misery of those early years of struggle. She will find her self alone with no support system.

Building a Curriculum for Trust and Caring

Originally curriculum planning if it could be called such, was left mostly in the hands of individual teachers. In North America there was no board, no educational authority until 1918. American curriculum had two basic ways to develop, the humanitarian concepts of Dewey versus the more scientific concepts of Tyler. Unfortunately

> "Tyler's questions - (1) What educational purpose should the school seek to attain? (2) How can the learning experiences be selected which are likely to be useful in attain these objectives?

> (3) How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction? (4) How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated?" Pinar and Madeleine (1976) p. 22

came to dominate the educational field of curriculum. Curriculum planning was initiated as a matter of expedience, a method of managing educational practice. This move to universal curriculum guides negated the differences in economics, social mores, gender, personal histories and ethnic and racial backgrounds of the students and teachers. Curriculums left in the hands of bureaucrats were designed to perpetuate rather than to question the status quo. Curriculums, because they were designed by upper class whites, mostly male, also perpetuated stereo typing, class determination and certain Jewish/Christian religious beliefs. With the extreme emphasis on the sciences as the new religion, curriculums have been structured in ways that benefit only those young people who fit the scientific model. Students are evaluated across the country with standard tests which can only reflect a certain upper white middle class sensibility. These evaluations totally ignore regional differences and the uniqueness of the human condition. In very recent years some educationalists have begun to question the wisdom of curriculums based on scientific measures and universities. According to Aoki (1989)

> "At the turn of the seventies then, we find both Bruner and Schwab giving recognition to the inadequacies of existing curriculum inquiry modes but unable at that time to suggest fundamentally new directions." p. 3

Aoki believes that curriculum development should focus on the meaning of being and existing in the world. This view of curriculum allows for the understanding of each student or teacher as an interdependent actor in the

play of life. Each actor has his own goals and aspirations while still being part of the play which also has goals and aspirations. The desires of the actor influence and modify the shape of the play and the shape of the play modifies and changes the desires of the actors. To be aware of the intents and consequences of actions or events on the play and the actors critical reflection is necessary.

> "In reflection, the actor through the critical analytic process uncovers and makes explicit the tacit and hidden assumptions and intentions held" Aoki (1989) p.16

This reflection is conscious and deliberate and focused upon revealing the actual intentions and consequences of action. With this awareness of intent teachers can then evaluate their actions more clearly. Events from the past are then understood from their future and reinterpreted. New meanings are given and then such action can be changed, or abandoned if they do not indeed promote the goals of the educational process. Likewise the goals of the educational process can be reassessed based on the new meanings given to these past events.

When designing a curriculum which will promote a sense of trust and caring, this reflective, critical approach is essential. It is necessary to gain a clear awareness of the intent of the curriculum as a whole and each event or project within the whole. In a reflective mode that is based upon love, the results of each project can conceivably redefine the overall intent of the curriculum and the curriculum can and will effect the nature of the projects and how they are presented. There is the interrelationship of the desires of the students, the teachers, and the demands of the institutions which will also modify and change the larger curriculum and individual projects.

This interdependence also causes certain themes to emerge in the designing of a curriculum which values its students' and its teachers' goals aspirations and needs. The first requirement of the course comes from the institution's perspective. It is important that students receive adequate instruction in the academic requirements of the subject. To ascertain what these requirements are, a caring instructor will research the following year's courses and evaluate what these courses expect from their students. Armed with this knowledge an instructor can than develop projects which address those needs. Of course, that is not all that an instructor will include in the course. A second element in the design of the curriculum recognizes that each instructor will have specific ideas about what is important to be learned, for instance, in a junior drawing course. Instructors are required to temper their own ideas with the demands of the system so that they adequately prepare their students for the future. Curriculum can not just be a selfish construct dedicated to an instructor's own beliefs and philosophies. The curriculum is then based upon the teachers past knowledge and their future expectations or understandings of the possibilities which may confront students in the future. The instructor uses their experiences both as an artist and as an instructor to help define the teaching criteria. In to this debate is added the teachers' anticipations of the what the future holds for the student, what the demands of the intuition will be and what the expectations of the community are. By using a critical reflective approach to curriculum the instructor can define and redefine the intellectual requirements of the curriculum.

This exploration and questioning of the intellectual requirements of the curriculum is not a one time activity. Like other aspects of teaching such as ethics, it is an on going process. It is not clear that there are universal

subject criteria that never change. The drawing requirements of the twentieth century are indeed different from those of the Renaissance or the Middle Ages. With advent of computers and easy access libraries, the notion of rote memorization comes into question. Every change requires that instructors reevaluate what is important or necessary knowledge. Once a curriculum has been developed based upon the current needs of the institution, the community and the subject matter itself, that curriculum is only partially completed. Such a process has yet to address the needs of the students and the teacher who must live that curriculum.

Although the institution has much power over determining what is taught about a subject it is not the only authority. The teacher who is often an expert in the subject also has insights based upon personal experience. Artists who teach, have a good understanding of the basics needed to be a good artist based upon their own experiences in the studio. As they attempt to make art they become painfully aware of their own short comings. When their own attempts are less than successful because of a lack of knowledge or skill, they are informed of the importance of that knowledge or skill for their students. Equally when success is achieved partially because of certain knowledge or skills this to inform the teacher part of them of the necessity or importance of those things for their students.

Teachers also learn from their classroom experiences what things they are best suited to teach and what things students respond to most. It is important to see the relevance of what is being taught. It is also important to be able to teach what is required. It is very difficult to teach someone how to draw if the instructor is not able to draw themselves. Beyond being capable is the ability to communicate that knowledge. This requires that the course is constructed in a way which suits the personality of the teacher.

Again there is this recognition of difference. Each instructor has a unique personality and their curriculum should, in part, reflect that personality. Teachers who feel great discomfort in close contact with their students should not be forced to develop a curriculum which insists on close contact. In such a case the teacher will inadvertently transmit their discomfort to their students. This discomfort may be misinterpreted as dislike or disdain and such misinterpretations can easily interfere with the learning process and the consecution of the safe and caring environment. Curriculums need to be constantly reevaluated to insure that they properly reflect who the teacher is and what they value. It is important to be sure that each instructor finds their own way to communicate but this must be tempered with the needs of the students and of the subject.

The students are the focal point of education; it is obvious that the third and ultimate questions of curriculum revolve around them. What students 'need' to know to satisfy the requirements of the institution and to build a strong foundation upon which further learning will take place is only half of the role curriculum plays. How this information will be taught is a major concern of curriculum. When examining the how of the curriculum again two major concerns arise. How to teach the information in way which builds upon itself and demonstrates a relevance which the student can perceive? is one question. The other question is how to incorporate the needs and uniqueness of each student in the learning process to foster a creative safe learning environment?

The first of these questions is the easier to discover. It requires a knowledge of the subject and an analysis of the way in which that knowledge is structured for that subject. For example it makes sense to teach a student the basics of perspective, proportion, shape and

composition before attempting to teach a student how to depict form, light and space. The principles of the former can be reinforced while teaching the latter and both these basic sets of concepts can be reinforced when teaching the next step in the drawing process. The two sets of principles occur in all realistic drawing and they provide the foundation upon which such drawing is built. It 'makes sense' to move from the simple problems towards the complex, both for learning logic and for student self esteem. Which brings us to the second and perhaps the most important curriculum question, how to present the information in a way which addresses the needs and the goals of the students?

Here in lies the most crucial aspect of the curriculum, how to get the students to learn and how to determine what it is that they are learning? Within this question comes the further question of, what is being taught to the students that is not academic, not part of the institutional curriculum but is part of the classroom learning experiences? When this question is asked it is really questioning the ways in which students are being shaped as human beings and consequently the way in which they will shape society. It is partially through the curriculum that the issues of power and control are addressed. Curriculum addresses the differences between gender, economics, ethnic and racial origins and social stratification. When choosing an art project it is perhaps impossible to include all these issues within a single project, however I try to envision projects which can allow for these differences to manifest themselves and still solve the problems posed. In life drawing classes it is easy to insure that the models are equally balanced between male and female. I try to recognize stylistic differences which are a product of each student's life history and my projects allow some room for expression, once the basics have been learned. That is to

say, as the course develops so my projects attempt to provide for each student to find personal expression within the confines of the project be expanded. Students with specific cultural or racial concerns should have a place to express those concerns, not necessarily within each project but within the context of the course. The individual differences that make each student unique results in individual approaches to projects. Some students have a natural tendency to work in a tight descriptive manner and while some students natural way is to be expressive and emotional, within my curriculum both approaches and the infinite number in between are valued and given a place to be expressed.

As with so many other aspects of teaching, when developing a curriculum, it is important to have a deep awareness of the interdependent elements involved. The community through the institutions has certain demands, requirements and expectations, you as the teacher/artist (scientist, mathematician) have certain requirements, and expectations based upon an intimate knowledge of the subject and the students have requirements and expectations based upon their goals and experience. When designing a curriculum all of these requirements, expectations and goals need to be balanced. This means that sometimes some goals or expectations might not be met or might be placed in a lower order of importance than other goals and expectations. However the decision as to which goals and expectations are most important are situationally based. That is the level of the subject being learning, beginner, intermediate or senior level determines emphasis to some extent but it is not the only determinate. Each class is different, a different mix and so each class requires different determinates based upon that classes level of competence, and their specific needs. Also the requirements of the next level up may change which requires a reevaluation

of the curriculum to meet new needs. In short curriculum is like painting, like teaching, it needs constant reevaluation and reinterpretation as new knowledge and new students reveal new interpretations of old ideas and actions. Curriculum is integrally tied to ethics as well. As ones' ethics change or modify this too cause a new interpretation of curriculum.

It should also be noted that curriculum does not just deal with the subject matter. There needs to be built into the curriculum the opportunity for those "teaching moments" that Max Van Manen speaks of. Curriculum can also provide room for students to address problems in the world that affect them and their well being. Curricula then, address the interdependence of the entire classroom culture, the students' needs academically and otherwise, the teachers' needs and those of the institution.

Beyond the Classroom

Most of the interactions and tensions I have been discussing so far have occurred within the bounds of the various institutions, but not all such interactions remain inside the institution. Sometimes the instructor's responsibilities go beyond the classroom.

I had a student once who worked hard in class, his drawing would be progressing nicely and then he would take it home and the next class he would be starting over. I would ask him what happened to his drawing and he would say that his mom had laughed at him and his work so he would destroy it. This made me very angry; I could see and feel his hurt. Eventually I told him not show his work to his mother and to rely on me for guidance. I encouraged him to really consider his option of moving out of his mother's house and move in with his

grandmother who lives in another city. At the end of the year he did this and later wrote to me of how well he was doing and how happy he was. He was receiving high grades and he was not destroying his work anymore.

This boy's mother was systematically destroying his self esteem. She was preventing him from reaching his potential and exploring his dreams. It was not possible to just be a sounding board, a place for him to vent anger, I also had to advise and guide him. He needed help in leaving what was an emotionally abusive atmosphere. I cared for him and I felt for his hurt and I was therefore required to point out to him that he had alternatives that might be less damaging and less painful to him than his current situation.

Sometimes the responsibilities of a teacher that occur outside the classroom needs are not confrontational but they do always seem to be connected to loving and caring for students. Teachers are sometimes called upon to give students money to buy food and or supplies. other times they may require the gift of time. I had a student who had to take time out from his classes to have open heart surgery whom I visited regularly and taught water colors to while he was recuperating. It was also necessary to get him an extended leave so that he would not lose half a years work. It is sometimes necessary to phone a student's parents because he/she is having severe psychological difficulties, informing them of their child's erratic and perhaps dangerous behavior. There are students whose home life becomes unbearable at times for them. I had a student once whose father was an alcoholic and she just needed a safe place to come to occasionally, so she would come to my apartment for coffee and to talk about her home problems. Students seem often to have the need for a surrogate parent

when they either are missing one or both parents or when their own parents are unapproachable. At the college level teachers often find themselves trying to find employment for their former students when possible and helping them with curriculum vitas and letter of recommendation. I loan them the use of my computer and I have even tutored them in my studio. In short caring teachers make themselves available to their students and their former students to help them in any way that they can. It is a life time commitment to them.

There is one other very important way in which the "I" that is a caring teacher, caring for the students and the subject matter and the "I" that is an artist interact. Students learn the most from what their teachers do rather than what they say. If I want my students to be their best in my class, to respect themselves and their artistic profession; than I must respect myself and my artistic profession. I talk to them about studio ethics. I never sell a painting that I do not personally think is a good painting. I work consistently and diligently in my studio. I take risks, try to learn from the paintings that do not succeed and I am constantly exploring. I work in a cooperative manner with my studio partner; a person I have known for over twenty years. I invite the students into my studio and allow them to respond to the work honestly even if some of those responses are negative. I have used their suggestions in my work. I explain to them both the technical and philosophical structure in the work. I share my technical "secrets" with them. When I have exhibitions, I invite my students, I make sure my framing is the best that it can be. I present my work as well as I can.

In this way the "I" which is a teacher, the "I" which is a painter and the "I" which is a learner, become as one. There is an integration of selves but not a loss of the individual identities. It is just in such cases the various selves

are acting in harmony toward the same goals. Internal conflicts are at a minimum. This happens in the classroom as well because I am teaching a subject that I love and that is a part of who I am. I love art and I love seeing it made, experiencing it and I love watching students discovering the same joys that I have. A very important part of my teaching is the revealing of the joy of learning to make and to experience art. The freedom it offers.
The ethical and caring teacher's responsibilities extend beyond the classroom in other ways as well. It is important to get involved in political issues that are important to the teacher and /or the students. I write letters to various institutions and agencies protesting what I see as injustices, such as the governments mishandling of the Oka crisis. I contribute to the food bank and other charitable organizations as well. In class, it is important to discuss social and political issues while the class is drawing or painting. We explore these concepts from as many points of view as the students and I have to offer. I express my views and give my reasons for holding such views but I do not enforce nor do I attempt to enforce those views on my students. In the process of these conversations I have had my mind changed on various subjects because students have presented good arguments or information I was not aware of. Whether I agree with my students' beliefs or not, is of course, not the issue. The issue is learning to think about these concerns and how, as a group, we learn to value others' opinions, to understand them and why they have them but not to always accept them.

Humor in the Classroom

Students will only come to those instructors in whom they sense there is a place of safety and trust. It is often difficult to establish this trust with

students who have been in abusive or destructive classroom settings. One very successful way to begin to break down the barriers in a classroom and to allow for the a "getting close" to occur is to use humor. "humor can be used as a social lubricant, a safety valve... or as a survival kit." Thomas (1993) p.1 (abstract)

Humor, especially when it directed at oneself, identifies the teacher as being human, down to earth and approachable. When a teacher is seen as being approachable and down to earth, the avenues to positive communication broaden and the trust deepens.

> "Basset and Smythe make three key statements about communication "No matter what the individual is doing, he or she is behaving, and you cannot be aware of the behavior and fail to interpret it in some way...If one is aware of the other's presence, he or she will assign meaning to the person's behavior."...communication is continuous...the verbal or non verbal transaction may have been completed by the action becomes subject to reflection...communication is a process of mutual influence." French (1985) p. 54-55

The trust often comes about as a result of a feeling of safety. Feelings of safety are nurtured by, the recognition and acceptance of difference, the awareness and attention to students' needs and the ability of the teacher to seriously listen to students. Students' feelings of trust for a teacher are often dependent upon how that teacher present themselves. The ability to laugh at your own short comings suggests a person who is secure and open to criticism. This allows students to feel that they can have a say in the classroom and the teaching agenda.

It is important, when using humor in a class, to be careful about who and where it is directed. I try to begin by directing the humor at myself. I joke about my, height, weight and lack of frontal hair. I have a somewhat

bizarre budgie, who provides some humorous and heart warming anecdotes. When I first begin to make jokes about my students I am careful to choose a student or students whose work is good and who I have perceived, will respond in a positive manner. It takes time to discern this and I usually wait until I have begun to get a sense of my students' personalities. This is very important because if the humor is seen as destructive and hurtful it will set back your relationship with the entire class, and may, even prevent a good and fruitful interaction. Once the humor is established it is also important to dispense it generously through out the classroom, though in different doses and different forms, depending upon the students involved. Again, that is why it is so important to get to know and understand each student as an individual with different needs and different ways of responding to those needs. It has been my experience that with the use of good natured and caring humor, I can be more critical of students work and get them to work harder than teachers who build a distance between themselves and their students.

Humor can also be used to elevate those times when students are struggling with a difficult assignment. Humor acts then as a relief. It also can be used to highlight the fact that several students are struggling with the issue and this helps students to feel part of the struggle rather than that they are struggling alone. Humor provides a relief from tedious work as well. Sometimes just finishing a project that requires attention to detail and precision can become "donkey work". The creative process is at a minimum as most of the decisions have been made and it is now a matter of executing those decisions. These projects seem to build up a certain amount of stress and laughter can cause a momentary release of that stress.

Humor can also be effective in reducing tensions between students, between students and teachers and when discussions about issues relating to the subject or to social concerns become a little too personal or involved. Humor often allows us all to see that we are becoming too one-sided or too dogmatic in our views. Other times the laugh simply diffuses the tensions and changes the course of the discussion to remove the conflict. It is important to make sure that the humor used does not imply that the issue is unimportant or trivial, rather it is meant to suggest that the arguments are becoming disruptive to the class and should be renewed later.

Even with all these stories to highlight ideas, this dissertation has really accomplished little for the liberation of the students and teachers if it does not resonate with the students about whom it is written. Without these students collaboration, then the ideas put forth so far are solely my interpretations and I am in danger of having fooled myself into believing that I am representing the feelings and the needs of my students as well as myself; just as I did in the story on page 73. Here then are the responses to the paper of some student I have taught over the last three years.

Chapter Seven:

Testimonials Beyond the Walls:

Students as More than one-dimensional Objects

But What of Living?

When a student enters University for the first time s/he enters a world alien and distant. Many have left home for the first time; they find themselves alone, insecure and unsure of their place in this new world. The sprawling institution, seems only to program them so that they, like dutiful robots, can take their place in a chosen field. No real attempt is made to prepare them for the lived experience of that chosen field, no real attempt is made to teach them to think creatively, what is needed from the university's point of view, seems to be, workers who can perform tasks within the bounds of certain given knowledge. Who comforts them, encourages them, and helps them to become an integrated member of this society? If we truly want, rather just giving voice to, a just fair, and most importantly a caring society, who helps this young adult to an understanding of what a world of cooperation versus competition would be like? Who is there for these young people in the great uncaring, unsharing metropolis? Who is the keeper of the children?

Throughout this dissertation I have made reference to my students and the experiences I and they have shared. In a sense I have tried to make a case for them. I have spoken for them in attempting to interpret their needs. But that is what this dissertation is, my interpretations of what students have told me, and what I have seen in my classes. With my memory of past events

and my interpretations of them from the stand point of love, I have tried to reveal a way of teaching that is beneficial and enjoyable for my students and myself. During the writing of this dissertation, I have often discussed my ideas with various students and sometimes whole classes. But this is not enough to give them a voice in this dissertation. This dissertation is an attempt to reveal not only my needs as an art teacher but the needs my students have expressed, then they should have their chance to respond to what has been written. Therefore, the following chapter will give student responses to what has been discussed. The students were chosen as I encountered them in the college or at university. They range in age, they are of both sexes and they are from both institutions where I work. One is a former student who is now working on her Masters of Home Economics and has had some teaching experience as a Teaching Assistant.

Each student has been given a copy of the dissertation as it stands to this point. They have all agreed to read the dissertation and then to be interviewed. I discussed with each student privately in a place of their choosing their reactions to what I had written. They were encouraged to express what ever feelings they had concerning what they had read. Once the interviews were over and this chapters' written, I went back to the main body of the paper and rewrote or revised or added to sections of it. In this way the dissertation became a communal activity in a way comparable to the way in which I teach and the way in which I make paintings. In the studio I often have other artists in to give advice and opinions which helps to clarify and reveal directions and philosophies for me. My students do this in the classroom by the work they produce, the way in which they interact and now by their responses to this paper. I should add at this time that

many of my students have asked if they might read the dissertation when it is done but time and space only allows for so many responses to be recorded.

Wendi

I first taught Wendi in 1989 when she enrolled in an Art Foundations spring session course that I was teaching. Wendi is a mature student, who was then a single parent with a young teenage daughter. She came to class with a low sense of self esteem; questioning her ability to achieve. As she progressed through my course and subsequent courses her sense of self and her ability grew together. Wendi also took a spring session painting course from me a few years later. From there she transferred from Home Economics to Fine Arts. A series of misfortunes and a somewhat bad experience with a professor in the department, plus her recognition of her own desires, has returned her to the Home Economics department where she is currently working on a Masters degree thesis. Wendi is interested in the creative process and has done some readings for her own work in the same areas of Self, Self/Other as I have.

Wendi believes that there is no one reality and that reality is a process rather than a product and is therefor always in a state of flux. She agrees that each student come to class with their sense of Self and reality and that this sense of self and reality is unique to each student. Therefore teachers, if they are going to fully interact and benefit their students, need to recognize the differences and give those differences value. Wendi believes that this recognition of differences can only be achieved in an atmosphere of caring and that this caring must extend beyond the classroom just as the student and his/her life extend beyond the classroom.

Wendi confesses that "Had I not had this grounding (caring) from you based upon the ideas in this dissertation, I doubt very much that I would still be involved in visual expression. Having seen some of the methods of teaching of other faculty members, I know that my self esteem would never have survived. If I had had "x". I doubt that I would have finished the introductory course, let alone continued." Wendi told me that it was the lack of the traditional teacher/student barrier, that allowed her "to feel comfortable enough to take the risks that [she] needed to take in an area that was so new to [her]. The criticism was easier to deal with because just as a friend can be more honest with you. It was easier to accept criticism from someone who cares about you." She understood that the criticism was directed at the work, not at her and was given to help her not to hurt her.

Wendi has taught as a teaching assistant during her tenure in the Masters program. She feels that "the background teaching that [she] had from [me] has strongly influenced the way [she] teaches her own classes." Although at first she fell into the trap of comparing students she soon learned that this was helpful for her. She began to evaluate each piece on its own and she found that this allowed her to relate to each student better as a person. Wendi too found herself seeing her students almost as her own children, finding herself encouraging and helping them through their difficulties.

Wendi also soon learned of the tensionality that necessarily exists in the Self/Other relationship but like me she found that this tensionality need not be problematic but was necessary for growth and change. It is this tensionality that highlights the need for critical reflection, questioning and reinterpretation of the student/teacher relationship and its goals. This evaluation is done considering the ethical ideal you have chosen, without

this ideal critical reflection would be like painting a painting with our any visual philosophy; it can't be done.

When speaking of the tensionality of the Self/Other relationship in a teaching situation, it is necessary to address the issues of power and control. Most people learn about power and control initially from a position of weakness, that is, they are the ones upon whom the power and control are being visited. Wendi remembers times when she was the reciprocate of the negative use of power and she realizes that as a person she could either react by repeating this behavior herself when in a position of power or she can remember the hurt and do all she can not to inflict similar feeling on those over whom she has power. As a student, and later as a teacher, Wendi saw clearly how situation in which power and control were held to a minimum and used in an atmosphere of caring; learning possibilities expanded for the student and the teacher. "It's not just the course material you are learning, it opens up to discussion many subjects at many levels that go beyond the traditional concerns of the classroom." When a teacher abuses the power of their position it seems to be done in an attempt to cover up a lack of confidence and feelings of being threatened. Teachers who must retain a strong sense of authority through intimidation and fear seem to do so because they fear that a close relationship with their students would undermine their ability to do their job in the way that they invision it. But real authority comes not from fear but from respect. Students who want to learn and respect your ability and desire to help them achieve their dreams will give you the respect and the permission to teach them. When the teacher works with the student as part of a team, to achieve mutual goals than students enter into learning eagerly and with anticipation. "Your enthusiasm for the subject matter and for my personal well being is a

positive motivating force. I remember a statement that you made in Art 231. " Art is ten percent talent and ninety percent determination." It was your caring that gave encouraged the ninety percent desire. It [the caring] gives a person the courage and belief in Self to achieve your goals."

So much of a student's life is spent in classrooms that the teacher has a great deal of influence in shaping those students' beliefs in themselves. Because it starts at an early age, it becomes deeply imbedded in the unconscious and is therefore hard to access, evaluate and change by the time that student is a young adult. Self esteem plays such a major role in a student's ability to learn, to grow and to be creative that it is imperative that teachers and the education system focus on programs that allow a student to learn in ways that do not damage their self worth. It is the atmosphere of caring that has allowed Wendi to find the strength and the courage to pursue her dreams in spite of her own self doubts and her negative experiences in certain classrooms.

From a teaching point of view Wendi's major concern with the notions of this dissertation is that she wonders how many teachers have the time to devote to their students that this philosophy seems to imply. She understands that each teacher must find their own ways but she hopes that as they reflect upon their teaching practices that they will make decisions out of love for themselves, their students and the subjects which they teach.

Donna

I met Donna at college in a Drawing 1 course I taught last year, 1991. She is a mature student, with a child of her own. Donna like so many other students came to class with a sense of insecurity, a lack of faith in her own

abilities. Donna is currently in her second year of Graphic Design and is doing well in her courses. As with most of my students, I keep in touch with her and follow her progress throughout the program.

Donna first statement was to reveal that she did not understand much of the philosophical or theoretical parts of the dissertation but she could relate to the stories that were represented. From her memories of education and her understandings of education history, she could not remember a time when education was not structure around issues of "power/powerlessness." She acknowledges that it must be hard for teachers and teacher educators to think of the system in any other way. But Donna thinks things could be different and should be. " If this dissertation is the written aspect of the way you taught us last year then, I most definitely want to be taught by this philosophy. You try to have the capacity to know your students in the whole, many other instructors do not feel that they have this capacity. It would be exciting if more would try." Donna sense that many teachers try to pretend an interest in their students that they do not feel and this false sense of caring comes off phony and insincere. This insincerity destroys what ever relationship exists between students and that teacher. She would rather that the teacher responded honestly to their students than to have them fake a caring attitude.

The notion of failure is an issue for Donna. While she dislikes the concept of failure she wonders if there is not some need for some kind of measure above which things are acceptable and below which they are not. In this she demonstrates that she is not a relativist but rather she would like to see the concept of failure changed so that attempts that do not achieve their goals are seen as stepping stones rather than as failures. Students often to do not do as well as they might because of a lack of time and

resources. Often students are not given the time or the opportunity to redo projects to demonstrate what they have learned by their misstatements.

While Donna does believe that the teachers and students should be partners in learning, she sees that developing a close relationship to students has some dangers for the teacher. "Society is afraid of touching each other physically and metaphorically." Donna sees the possibilities of charges of sexual harassment and abuse being wrongly directed at teachers who reach out to their students. Many teachers are afraid to open up to their students for fear of losing their jobs and their reputations. One accusation can ruin a career. But when there exists a great distance between the teacher and the students, learning is impeded. "Like being a mother I have found out that being an authoritarian doesn't work and I have had to find different ways of guiding my chide and helping her. When I am frustrated I sometimes feel it would make life easier for me if people [my child] would just shut up and do what I tell them but it would not be right." For parents as for teachers, the goal wants to be to find ways to get people to want to do out of desire rather than out of fear.

Donna has a real understanding of how society can construct a person. "Women are what we are, made by society. I understand this on a personal basis. Women identify themselves by what they give to others. Women have no sense of self. If you ask them what is important about themselves they would relate their importance to others. Most of us (the Drawing 1 class) experienced in your class the freedom to discover more about our selves." Donna remembers the first time she had a teacher who allowed her to learn in an atmosphere of love, freedom and safety. It was in a grade seven class and she still remembers it fondly. "Unfortunately it did not happen again until your class."

Most of Donna's school memories were not pleasant. She remembers a student be spanked in front of the entire class and sensing that child's humiliation and pain. She remembers be told that women should not bother with math and science because they were no good at it. In one algebra class she recalls how the teacher would only call on the boys to give answers to math questions. "This is still with me; I still feel that women can't do many things even though I know better intellectually. It still affects the way I learn."

Being told that you are inferior, stupid, incapable by teachers and parents as a person grows up has a life long effect upon your ability to learn and to appreciate your own abilities. It causes people to question their success and to look for ways to demean those successes. "I did well because he, my teacher felt sorry for me" or "they (the teachers) must not care much about grades because they gave me such good one." Remember the native woman's story earlier in this dissertation, she was a victim of negative teaching that affected her ability to appreciate positively her own accomplishments. When such negativity occurs of a long time the effects are much more devastating and much harder to over come.

Ellen

Ellen is a second year Environmental student whom I taught last year, 1991. She took drawing one and two from me. Ellen came to class like so many students, unsure of her abilities but she has done very well. She is about three months away from graduation at this time.

Ellen found that she identified with many of the stories in the dissertation because she had similar experiences at school, especially

elementary school. She told me a story of one her experiences in school where a sensitive teacher helped her to better interact with her classmates. Ellen was a perfectionist always wanting to be the top student and because she often was she began to develop an attitude of superiority over classmates. "One day a teacher took me aside after a ball game and said, "Ellen I noticed you think you are better than other students and make fun of them. I mortified me, I had not realized I was doing it. It made me think. I realized I was insecure so I hid it behind a facade of superiority. Since then I have changed my perspective. I try to put myself in other's places. I emphasize. The teacher alerted me to a problem in a gentle way without making me feel bad. She asked me to think about others more and less about myself." This was a case where a caring teacher stepped in a loving way to help someone who needed some direction. Ellen life was in a small but important way changed by this caring touch.

The notion of viewing the Other as an enemy was important to Ellen. She told me that this year they have instructors who encourage a strong sense of competition. In these classes, students are always searching for a scapegoat to blame their problems on. If so and so was just not in the class or would not behave in certain ways then everything would go well. Because focusing on a specific student never seems to reduce the tensions in the class, it seems the class is always searching for a new scapegoat. This is phenomena I have noticed occurs frequently. Almost without fail students in painting classes will complain about air quality, lighting; blaming fellow classmates being for over use of solvents, etc. and staff for poor lighting and poor teaching, when their work is not going well and when the levels of stress are high. When the work improves and the stress levels fall no one seems to notice the air quality or the lighting or even the techniques of

fellow classmates. Instructors too will focus on certain students, if they are having problems with a class. I have even heard staff declare that they have a bum class, a write-off. There seems to be no doubt in that staff members mind that it is the students and not the staff member who are at fault for a perceived poor performance.

Ellen finds this emphasis on competition insidious and she says it is difficult not to "get sucked into it." When standards are so high, and you are always being told that only the top ten percent will achieve success, and nothing is ever going to be good enough, it creates an atmosphere which discourages risk taking. Students do not share ideas or give to each other. Everything is hidden and students begin to fight among themselves.

Keath

Keath is a young man, I first met when I was teaching an evening Drawing 1 for college in 1987. This drawing class was his first post secondary educational experience. It was also Keath first introduction into serious art issues. Keath went on to take Fine Arts at university, after receiving his visual art diploma from college. I taught him again in his third year of painting. Keath is currently three months from graduation.

Keath found the dissertation a validation of many of the things that he has felt and experienced both at University and College. Keath felt that the caring aspect of teaching has been missing for him through most of his experience at both college and university. He sees this as detrimental the learning process. When an instructor seems not to care for the students as individuals the instructor often seems to be working against the best interests of the student but when the instructor cares, "learning seems to be more

personal meaningful." The relationship between the instructor and the student is for Keath much like a parent child relationship. Many students need an older adult to talk to when their parents are unapproachable or absent.

"When I first me you I noticed you treated everyone equally; you were like a friend in class. You did not put yourself on pedestal. Ever since I took that first drawing course from you, you have been a source of inspiration to me. You have helped me both technically and philosophically more than other instructors. Whenever people tell me I have improved I recognize that it is me who has made the progress but it is from the background that you have given me that the progress springs. When I am down on my own painting I remember you telling me how you too have had to work through these bad times and I find it easier then to deal with my problems."

Keath finds that most of his instructors distance themselves from the students. "When you have many personal problems and you come to school and your instructor is indifferent to these problems, then you feel abandoned and alone." Keath feels that it is easier to deal with school when instructors are sensitive to the student's life problems. Even when an instructor is reaching out to another student it helps because it shows that this instructor does care about each student as a person. "When someone in spring session was missing many classes you took the time to find out why. You write to her and tried to find out how you could help her. The is impressed me. It showed that you cared about your students."

Keath feels he has learned to interact better with his classmates from the way in which he was treated in my classes. "When you critique work you always start with the positive before you go to the problems. It is sensitive and caring. It gives hope. Now when I am asked by fellow students to give

my advice I too always start by complementing the work. I learned this from you. My classmates say I should be and instructor because I am sensitive and positive."

Keath remembers an other instructor who was not positive or sensitive to his needs and goals. When he was at the college he was told "to go to a different school and [he] was told not to go into painting but into industrial design. [I] was not given any painting information so I did not know how to improve. I was give nothing. She [the instructor] completely tried to talk me out of going to university. I would ask her for help in the studio and she couldn't or wouldn't help me. She would just walk away. She never gave me any sense of growth or progress. If I had not me you I would not have go to university. You inspired me to go. "

This instructor also used other students work to attempt to force Keath into a specific mode of painting. She had one way of doing things and would entertain no others. Keath' natural tendencies lay in other directions. It was not until he arrived at university that he found the space to pursue his own vision.

Keath is a good example of a student who needed a teacher who was also a second parent. He needed to cared for in ways that his parents were unable to provide, but he also points out a danger that exists when working with young people. Too often Keath has given me too much credit for his successes. I often have to tell him that all I did was show him something's, and he did the rest. It is important not to let students get too strong a picture of you as a savior. Unfortunately it happens all too often because there appears to be such an overwhelming lack of caring in schools today. The emotional dimensions of education are under emphasized. While females are encouraged to express their emotions males are taught to hold their

emotions inside and act rationally. This proves to be a negative for both sexes because emotional responses are not given the credibility that rational statements are given so females are not taken as seriously as men while at the same time men are not given permission to explore their feelings.

Mitch

Mitch is a young man who took a spring session painting course from me in 1992. It was the first time I had taught him though I knew him from his friendship with some of my students. Mitch has a learning disability which was not at first recognized and seldom dealt with adequately. He is in his final months of his B.F.A. program and will graduate in the Spring.

"This [the dissertation] should be made into a book because if you were going to be a beginning teacher this would help you to deal with students. It would help anyone in dealing with other people." Mitch went through the same rather harsh treatment as the young man in the opening story of this dissertation. "My teacher tried to fail me and force me out of school because I had a learning disability. I will remember this bad experience for a lifetime. It took me about six or seven years to get over it. I am still afraid to take the initiative because I fear failure and ridicule. " Mitch had a grade seven teacher who began the process of healing for him. "I have one major teacher that influenced me in grade seven. He used the same techniques as you. I was in a special class for slow learners. He told me that he knew I would make it to university. He encouraged me to learn and he spent much extra time with me. He is still a friend of mine and we keep in touch." Mitch's mother was also a positive force in his life. She often supported him, but nonetheless Mitch has "always lived in a fear that

teachers will attack me and get rid of me." Ironically Mitch is till fighting this battle at university where he is being threatened by a professor even thought this professor does not teach him. When Mitch talks to me about it I can see the old fears reemerging. The fear that his early educational experiences have had on him will never fully leave him, especially when he is confronted by an uncaring teacher.

"Why are most Profs. here?" Mitch asks. He feels that they are far more concerned about their own research and their own professional careers than they are about students and the student's welfare. Mitch believes that his experience at university would have been far more enriching if he had more instructors that recognized students as whole beings. Mitch feels that too many professors are intellectually smart but not practical; they do not seem to have the social skills and the caring personality needed to be a good instructor.

Pat

Pat is in her last year of her Bachelor of Fine Arts program. I have taught her at college and at university. She is in the process of discovering who she is as a person and as a painter. Part of this process of discovery has lead to an interest in Buddhism.

Pat believes that many teachers have a great deal of difficulty in letting go of the control of their students' artistic direction. While she agrees that learning skills are important she believes that there comes a time when students need to be encouraged to find their own voice or their own visual identities. Teachers need to be sensitive to the moment when this "breaking

away" should occur. "I needed to be nudged. I was afraid to break away, but you affirmed to me that it was up to me find my own sense of who I was as a painter. It was your affirmation of my talent and my language as authentic and valid that allowed me to take chances and grow" Because she now has a sense of her worth she feels that she is more able to 'deal' with negative teachers.

Pat remembers the spring session class I taught her as having a "progressive ambiance". While students endeavored to become better painters there appeared to be none of that negative competition between students. It was the first time that Pat could remember being in a class where marks were not an issue.

Pat feels that a close relationship with an instructor is a valuable asset in the learning process. Before the spring session class she had been studying under a professor who preferred a distant and very separate relationship between himself and his students. He was unapproachable. The students refereed to themselves as mechanical students, not learning but merely reproducing what was expected of them by their instructor. She remembers one student who felt he could only be expressive and learn when I came around to talk to him.

Honesty is another problem Pat finds disturbing. In this class where she felt like a mechanical student she said that her instructor said that each student should fine their own sense of self expression. But she said he had a hidden agenda, and he was in reality directing the students toward very specific forms of expression. When the students came to realize this, the bond of trust was broken and the students stopped learning. Pat feels that students must be able to trust their instructors and fell that these instructors have a sense of integrity.

Jill

Jill is in her last year of college finishing off a diploma in Graphic Design. She is a very caring person and often helps her fellow students by offering them comfort when they are in distress.

Jill related to the dissertation on a personal level. She remembered her experience of the year before, being in my class and being in a class with an instructor who was not sensitive to his students needs. Jill feels that much what occurs in the classroom was directly tied to the personality of the teacher. She feels that codes of ethics cannot protect students from psychological damage inflicted upon them by their teachers. She remembers her class being intimidated and humiliated by this insensitive instructor and yet as class feeling that they had no real recourse because the instructor did not act out side of the legal code of ethics. Jill feels that it is imperative to learning that the barriers come down between teachers and students. She wants to learn out of respect for her teachers' abilities not out of fear. She likes to be challenged but in a constructive way. "It is important to have an instructor in which you can be vulnerable."

Jill remembers the first day of her first semester. As she and her class mates met each instructor through the day they became convinced that this was going to be an exciting experience. That is until they met their last instructor. While all the other instructors had been friendly, sharing with the students some of their personal histories and generally beginning to build a friendly relationship, this last instructor seemed intent on creating a conflictual relationship. "We came out of his first class cowering." She remembers the on going conflict between the class and this instructor. Jill still wonders why the class allowed him to intimidate and at times humiliate

them. A journal Jill kept for her English class is dominated by musing upon this instructor.

Maurice

Maurice is a young man in his thirties with three children. He is divorced and his children live with his wife. Maurice is currently finishing his diploma in Graphic design at a local college.

Maurice found that reading the dissertation conjured up many images from his own past. He assured me that it would not bother him to discuss the major events that this paper reminded him of. However as our conversation continued, he became more and more emotionally agitated. Maurice remembers everything about his teachers, the way they looked, sounded and smelled. He remembers his feelings towards them as well. When he started school in grade one he had a very nice teacher whom he liked a lot. However about half way through the term, the school decided to place half of his class with a grade two class. Maurice was part of the class that was transferred. He remembers that many children were upset because no one explained to them why they had to move but also because the grade two teacher had a reputation for meanness. As Maurice found out her reputation was well deserved. Maurice's memory of the rest of grade one and all of grade two is that he got the strap almost every day. Most students did. If you got more than five wrong on an exam you got the strap. He says that she always found some reason to give out the strap. He remembers being too terrified to ask to go to the wash room because he felt he would be given the strap for asking. As a consequence he would wet himself and get the strap anyway. While all this strapping was going on

Maurice remembers that this teacher would sometimes give him money to buy treats for himself. He said she would sit at her desk in such a way that he was able to see her underwear and he is sure that she was aware of it. Maurice remembers that she wore stiletto heels and that just the very sound of those heels on the floor would cause him great terror.

This teacher had such a terrifying effect on Maurice that he did poorly in school. She was always having his parents send him to psychologists to see if there was something wrong with him. The psychologists always confirmed that he was a normal boy with normal learning abilities. Maurice could not really talk to his parents about the problem though he did tell them. They were the kind of parents who believed that the school knew its job and did it.

The result of this experience for Maurice has been that he has always been terrified of any new situation. He has to go on praticum as part of his program and he is terrified that he will fail. He finds it hard to believe that he is good at or for anything and feels he needs constant reaffirmation. Yet he finds it hard to believe this reaffirmation. Maurice also confided in me that until he was in his early twenties he had no sexually feelings. He liked holding hands with girls and going places with them but the relationships were always Platonic. He believes it is because of his experiences with this teacher that this occurred.

Maurice also told me that when his first two children were born, both boys, his brother-in-law told him and his wife that they had to spank the children to bring them up properly. He said he and his wife dutifully spanked both boys especially the oldest on the "bum" whenever they felt it necessary. Just telling me of this brought back regret and a sort of loathing for him.

Although the interview only lasted about half an hour, it became obvious near the end that Maurice was quite disturbed by these memories and it was becoming very difficult for him to continue. He did express that he felt all teachers should enter into an equal relationship with their students. He said he always worked harder for teacher with whom he had a positive and friendly relationship. He said he needed deadlines and consequences but that those consequences should be clear and non-abusive. He also wonders why some teachers are one person in the class and another outside the class. Maurice said that students usually were able to see that the teachers were consciously assuming a role and this was somewhat of a dishonest act. He wished teachers would be themselves in the classroom.

Maurice said that he enjoyed the dissertation very much and found that it was the stories that he related to more than the theoretical parts. He said he could understand what was being said but it became real for him when he began to read the stories. It was with the stories that he related in an emotional and physical manner.

It was hard to know just where to put Maurice's interview because unlike the other students I talked to Maurice was very visible shaken by his memories from the past. His teacher demonstrated a total unawareness of her effect upon him and her other students. She kept sending him to psychologists when it was she who was preventing him from learning. Maurice said that he built his own world in elementary school and retreated into it. He made few friends and took part in few activities. Having never been struck at home he was shocked by this treatment.

There was no compassion in this teacher's response to her students. She seemed to take pleasure in hurting and terrorizing these children. The

effects of her actions are still haunting Maurice and yet he never expressed any hatred towards her only a lingering terror. Terror not only of her but of much of life. He remembers that before her he was an outgoing self confident child and after her he lived in a shell. He became afraid of the world and lost his sense of value.

In one sense, Maurice embodies the whole nature of this dissertation. His experiences in a very stark and almost pathological way, highlights the need for teacher awareness of the wholeness of children and the consequences and motivations behind their actions towards their students. Maurice's story underlines the suffering caused by an adversarial Self/Other relationship. It shows us the importance of compassion in the classroom and the on going damage that occurs when compassion is missing. His story demonstrates that the effects of a teacher and their actions upon a student can last a life time.

Themes

Self Value

In talking with these students and others certain commonalties seemed to appear. The most common and obvious theme was that of insecurity. Many students expressed a sense of self doubt concerning their own abilities. If these self doubts are not addressed, it has been my experience that these students then do not do as well as they might. Their lack of confidence prevents them from taking risks and going beyond the traditional. It also prevents them from critically analyzing what is being said to them by their instructors and their fellow students. Low self esteem at its worst can prevent a student from working at all or the student ends up

desperately seeking to please the instructor by finding out "what they want" and then giving it to them.

Trust

Tied into this notion of self esteem is the whole idea of trust. When students feel unsure of themselves they need to feel safe in the classroom. Many students expressed to me that it was the sense that they could trust their instructor which allowed them to venture forth into areas they would otherwise not have dared. This trust takes on more than one form. Students expressed their need to trust that their instructor would be honest with them and guide them toward their goals accurately. This means that the instructor is being asked to put the students needs and aspirations ahead of the theirs. The students were aware that many instructors have a hidden agenda and that these instructors advise students based on this hidden agenda rather than upon the needs and aspirations of the students.

Another type of trust issue that students raised was to do with honesty. When an instructor says that he wants each student to find themselves in their own work, that is each student should pursue their own vision, but grades on the basis of certain artistic biases then the sense of trust is lost. If an instructor has certain strongly held biases which influence the way they grade then students feel that that instructor should be up front and honest about those biases. If students are 'punished' for developing their own vision upon encouragement by their instructor, by being given a low grade or a negative critique, students soon learn that that instructor's word is not to be trusted.

Alienation

Another common theme students expressed was a sense of alienation or isolation. This too often can be connected to sense of insecurity. Adult students just as children need to feel cared for. Many students expressed their feelings that most of their instructors simply did not care about them as people. Often these students would be struggling in their work under the impression that they were the only ones who were having such difficulties. Many students expressed to me that when I shared my own frustrations as a student and as an artist with them it helped them to realize that struggle was just part of the learning process. To know that an established painter and an older student like myself shared the same difficulties and self doubts that they felt helped them to come to terms with their feelings. Having someone, their instructor caring for them specifically and trying to help them through their difficult times also made the struggle easier to bear.

Such concerns as these by students affect their ability to learn. If they are filled with self doubts, mistrust, and loneliness then they are not able to devote enough of their energy towards learning. By spending much time with the students creating an atmosphere of caring and trust, an instructor will eventually reaped the reward of harder working more dedicated students. When students feel loved, safe and have some confidence in themselves they are more willing to take risks, to question to probe themselves and the subject under study.

The future

Students who are at the end of their schooling, have a new set of insecurities to deal with. These students face an unclear future. The

recession with its layoff and business failings have left many students feeling as though there is no future for them. Many students come to me near the end of their program wondering if it is worth while to continue with such a bleak future. Students also often require some reassurance that the effort they are making will pay off later in the form of a job. This is something no instructor can guarantee. It is important to talk to these students about the kind of goals they are setting for themselves. From my experience it has been the attempt to achieve the goals and not the goals themselves that are important. That is, I try to tell my students that if you are living your dream, pursuing your ambitions then you are successful. It does not matter if you are able to do it full time or part-time nor does it matter how well recognized you are in your field, what is important is the doing of it to the best of your abilities. It is also important though to try to give the students as many tools for survival as is possible. This ranges from teaching the subject well, to curriculum vitae preparation, to social skills and personal presentation. Students like to know that you will be there for them even after they have graduated. Again it is this issue of caring. Knowing that someone will be there to help them gives them more courage to venture forth into the job world.

The trust issue is there again as well. Students want to know that when you are advising them on graduate schools, types of employment, curriculum vitae, etc. the advice that you are giving them is for them, to help them, not to promote some hidden agenda. I know of an instructor for instance who advises all her students to apply to a certain graduate school which promotes her artistic philosophy. She does not consider the students' needs and consequently sends many students to this school inappropriately. These students usually return without finishing or even if they finish they are

angry and distrustful. Often the experience has been such that the student's self esteem is badly damaged and some even stop making art. This instructor will attempt to dissuade students from attending other Universities because these Universities expouse a philosophy which differs from hers. Again she does not take the nature of the student into account but is only interested in promoting a certain philosophical view. Students for the most part feel betrayed by her and undermined.

Whether students are just beginning or are on the verge of graduating the same issues of being cared for, of trust, and of safety seem to dominate. They need help setting realistic goals and they need help in understanding the value of effort. The word success is another one of those words that I would like to see dropped from the language. While the achieving of a goal is usually a rewarding experience, I have found as a painter and as a teacher that it is the living of the goal that brings the most pleasure. Almost everyone can find some way in which to live their dreams and it is that living of the dream that I try to get my students to strive for. Living the dream does not rely on competition with others it is a way of life a personal development.

About the students

The responses of these students are not selective but are reflective of the many students I have discussed the dissertation with. It would be good academically to provide students who disagree with the dissertation but I could not find any! Students have a real need to be treated wholly. Their sense of self, their emotional and physical needs all play a role in how and what they learn. Universities and colleges, partly because of their size, are impersonal institutions that leave student's feeling abandoned an alone.

Most often students who are not doing well need help, not derision. When a teacher takes the time to show interest and concern for a student then students most often responds with greater effort and determination. Many of students tell me that they do their best work for me rather than other instructors because they know that I care. This is not to imply that all student can be helped but even if a student is unreachable other students notice the effort made, and this tells them that an instructor cares about their welfare.

The students are here to tell us what they need but we need to listen. Students feel disenfranchised and isolated from the very the educational experience that they are living. Large lecture theaters may be the most efficient way to transmit information but they fail miserably in creating an understanding of that information and of creating an ability to use that knowledge in a problem solving mode. My students have told me they resent being treated as computes which merely function to store and regurgitate knowledge; they want to learn how to think creatively and develop the ability to make cognitive leaps using the knowledge they learn along the way.

Universities and colleges with their large classes and expansive physical structures have a way of isolating students. They often do not even get a chance to learn their fellow students' names never mind having the chance to share the learning experience. My students have made it abundantly clear that a sense of community, a sense of belonging and sharing in the struggle to learn, coupled with a classroom structure geared towards problem solving and creative thinking is a far more effective tool for generating hard work and determined learning that is the more traditional three hundred or more lecture theater which requires only the taking of notes and memorization. Students need to feel that someone else

care for them, someone else who wishes that they succeed and someone else who is willing to take the time to help and watch over them. That person needs to be their teacher!

In discussions with my students, they have often reinforced their wish for cooperative classrooms where learning is a shared experience. But this sense of cooperation is often destroyed by a hierarchical grading system which forces students into a combative mode. Students too often become obsessed with grades and not with learning. They become secretive and jealously guard their knowledge, restricting what is learned by the class as a whole. Weaker students lose out because those students with better skills no longer share their expertise and understanding with the less knowledgeable. When the students' voices are heard, education becomes a rewarding and meaningful experience, when the voices are silenced, education ceases.

This dissertation cannot by its very nature have a conclusion. Instead the last chapter is designed to review what has been explored and the conclusions which have been arrived at thus far. Even as this last chapter is being written there a shift in my thinking as I explore further the meaning of life, teaching and painting. New ways of understanding are always opening up for me and these new ways of seeing change who I am and how I participate in the process of life. By the time you finish this dissertation I hope that you too will have experienced some change in the way you enter into the process of teaching. The life journey is one of constant unfoldment and growth.

Chapter Eight:

Reflections on Compassionate Teaching

In chapter one, I demonstrated how I came to the question of what the meaning of being a teacher was. This has been a life process. In other words, while the question was focused during the writing of this dissertation, the grounding for the posing of this question was found in my life experiences as a teacher, as a painter and just as a participant in the world. While it took a crisis to bring the question into focus, the question was already being asked by me in my dissatisfaction with my approach and my many experiments with teaching styles over those years. The difference lies in awareness.

Before the researching and writing of this dissertation I was not really aware of my dissatisfaction. I just kept changing my approach because of vague uneasy feelings. These changes were not always made in the best interests of my students even though consciously this is what I had in mind. It took some very forward student confrontations and a crisis of major dimensions to shake me out of my own unawareness. My first awareness was simply that there was something wrong. My picture of my classroom and myself did not resonate with that of my students. As well, some of my colleagues found my classroom tactics threatening. I lost my job amid high praise for my performance. Something was not as it seemed to be and I needed a way to understand what was happening and a way out of what was wrong. I needed a way to look at the past in a new light and to reinterpret the past as a way of understanding the present. The writing of

the dissertation presented such an opportunity. However, here lay a very large problem. I was a painter, not a writer. If I was to undertake such a large endeavor, I needed a method of writing that would allow me to think like and construct this dissertation in a way that would parallel my painting. I found such a method in narration and memory work.

Narration was the logical choice of style for my dissertation because like painting a picture, narration allows the author to re-create the story. That is to say, through the narration of past events; construct the story in such a way that it demonstrates or highlights a certain position. It is not that the story is fabricated but rather that as the author, I can select the elements of the event that best make my point while leaving out those elements which are not pertinent to the purpose of the story. Narration presents the story from a specific perspective point. Through the telling of the story and the choice of what is included and excluded, I reinterpret the meaning of the event. I can connect a past event to my present understanding and thus present the event from a different perspective than I might have at the time of the event. Narration also allows for the linking of events in ways that would not perhaps have been possible because it allowed me to focus on and emphasis the continuity between events. I can construct a larger story line, in this case based upon compassion and love and use that theme to link events into a coherent narration. Events do not even need to presented in the chronological order in which they occurred but are rather presented in the order most appropriate to the intent of the story.

By this process certain themes emerge that are relevant to the coherence and meaning of the story, my story of teaching. These themes are then arrived at through the retelling of the story rather than having predetermined themes shape the story. What emerged through such a

process is an "authentic" interpretation of the development of these themes. The first of these themes was the theme of identity.

Identity

> "Man finds himself estranged from being, different from things and alien to himself... This, fundamentally, is the human contest wherein the question of otherness arises, requiring a philosophical interpretation of its complexity and an attempt to see how its ambiguity may be variously mediated." Desmond (1987) p. 5

This question of identity can be either a helpful or a hurtful thing. If one chooses to withdraw from the richness of the Other, then one might either choose to dominate and subordinate the other or one might choose to give over one's self to the construction of the Other. Both of these paths will lead to suffering because suffering is caused by alienation as well as by a denial of one's "inner identity. The solution according to Desmond (1987) is to

> "enter into a fitting relation with what is other and so come to proper wholeness within oneself. The issue, that involves the possibility of a double attainment: internal wholeness of being and external harmony with being." p. 5

Simply said, it requires an acceptance of one's internal understanding of one's identity at the present moment even if this identity is at odds with the social constructed image others have of us. Once this identity is accepted it is then up to us to find a way to exist in harmony with the Others with whom we come into contact with. Here it is useful to remember that the an acceptance of the notion that the self is in a constant state of change does not preclude the notion of an identity. Identity is our understanding of

ourselves at this moment. It allows us to separate our being from all other being. While this identity is always changing; it's changes are usually gradual and coherent allowing us to maintain a sense of Self. It is this sense of self, the things we believe at this moment, that must be integrated into the rest of the life process in a positive and helpful way. This is accomplished in part, by recognizing and giving value to the Other.

How I view my self determines, to a large extent, how I act within any given event. If I believe that I am essential predetermined, that is that I have an essence or a core self, I understand that my responses to any given situation are limited and to some extent predetermined. If I believe that I am shaped by the Other than again I understand that my possibilities are limited by the imagination of the Other. These are not my views. I do not accept the notion of self as a constant or unchanging essence nor do I wish to allow myself to be shaped by other's expectations; I see my identity constantly changing.

Our identity is being formed and reformed constantly. With each passing moment and each experiencing of an event either physically or in recollection or memory, who I am becomes something new. Without awareness these identity formations imprison me. I become something not of my own making but rather I allow myself to be created by unquestioned recollection or by the others with whom I interact. As others create and recreate me, I become their creation and create and recreate myself in their image even when internally I rebel against these constructs. It is this duality of understanding of identity that is the cause of suffering. These creations then become habitual ways of being that are static and unchanging. Again the conflict with the ever changing Self and the static socially constructed self, inflict great internal pain on my being, restricting my growth. I recreate

myself unaware that I am recreating myself in the image the Other has constructed for me. This unawareness prevents me from seeing the possibilities for other ways of being. Life becomes a painful struggle as I cling to old beliefs and constructions which prevent me from seeing the possibilities inherent in the life process.

By becoming aware of the process of being, the knowledge that life is not objectifiable but is rather a process, I can begin to take control of my destiny and open up the realm of possibilities. But if I cling to any concept of my self I begin again to close down the possibilities. I can just as easily trap myself into an objectified self as I can allow others to do it for me.

Once I recognize that life is fluid, I am fluid and meaning is fluid. I am open to the possibilities of life. Once it is recognized that nothing is static but that all things and ideas are constantly in a state of change and that I can choose which possibilities I will follow then the life journey can become one of joy and fulfillment. In this fluidness the past and the future come together in the present and I become in the present a combination of my interpretations of the past and my desires for the future. My desires for the future change my interpretations of past recollections and those new interpretations change and define my desires for the future. If I am lost in the past, and remember events in ways that cause pain and anger, then I am tied to the past making these past recollections my present. In other words, I continually recreate the past pain and suffer it in the present. It is not the event that I retrieve but the interpretation and the pain of it which is a present construction. The past never returns. In the recollection of the past I am living the recollection not the actual event, in the present. I can be trapped by this or I can learn from it, through reinterpretation which originates in the present. If I allow myself to reinterpret the past events

which I reconstruct through narrative I free myself from them and allow for new possibilities of understanding. If I habitually recollect old events without new insights I am doomed to stagnation and suffering. By dwelling on those past events that bring me suffering, I construct a life of suffering but by dwelling on and pursuing those ideas that bring compassion and joy to my life, I construct a life worth living. As Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

The future too can trap me. If I tie myself too tightly to a desired future, I might not see the possibilities of the present as they unfold. The idea is to make the future into the present, to be what I desire it to be. Then by acting in the present in those ways that suggest that I am already what I desire to be, I cause the future desired self. But there is danger in this as well. If I self determine or tie my sense of self too closely to a designed future way of being, I may miss other possible ways of being and therefore be trapped by the future. Therefore I try to live always in the present and I try to live in this present with compassion and love. By doing so I hope to cause a constant present that is joyful, compassionate and fulfilling for my self and for those with whom I have contact.

Such a view of past, present and future might suggest that life led in such a way would lack continuity. It might be just a process of bouncing from one event to the other with no direction or intent because I do not cling to some future sense of myself. But I have constructed an ideal way of being grounded in the notions of love. Awareness of this ideal includes the possibilities of my being and I then take action to cause these states of being. These actions are based on the value I give to the meaning of the event or events of my life.

Ethics

To give value to the meaning of the event requires that I develop a sense of ethics for the value of something is grounded in ethical formations. To develop an ethical awareness, I need a sense of purpose, an ideal. I have chosen for my sense of purpose to become a compassionate being. It is this sense of purpose that give true continuity to my life. Once chosen, it becomes the grounding point from which all else arises. From here I can reinterpret the past with new understandings that are grounded in love and I can evaluate or give this recollection new meanings from which I can learn and develop. The question arises then, being grounded in compassion to or for whom? To seek to be a loving being also then requires definition. For me, I seek to be a compassionate being to myself, to the Other(s) and to the world as it exists both physically and spiritually. It is important to understand that to call oneself a loving being is not to define self but rather to describe a process of development which defines such a state of existence.

There lies within this concept a great responsibility because I have affect on my students. With the realization of interconnectedness and affect comes this need for ethical concerns. The Other is no longer viewed as separate and self determined. I affect the other's life process as the other affects mine. I and the other are in this sense the same, we are interconnected, part of the same experience. Since I affect the Other's life process, I have responsibility to the Other. If I have chosen to be a compassionate being that means that my responsibility lies in bringing good to the other. I have chosen to bring compassion to others and to show others how to bring compassion to themselves and to others. This state of

being which is again not a definition of selfhood but rather a process, has serious ramification for pedagogy.

Ethics then, in this sense, is more than just preventing harm or acting in unlawful or forbidden ways; it is to be reflective and compassionate. Ethical being requires that each situation is understood for itself and each action taken or observed is interpreted within the confines of love. Awareness is of course the key. That is to say, in each situation the ethical person attempts to understand what is occurring from many perspectives and then evaluates these understandings from the perspective point of caring. The actions that are then taken are constructed from the compassion of the teacher for all those involved in the event. This might mean that the teacher may take actions that in of itself could appear to be uncompassionate such as insisting that a student stay within the bounds of the curriculum; however, such action seen in a larger perspective would emerge as the most compassionate act foreseeable. In an other instance such acts could be the worst possible solutions to a problem. Each situation then must be seen in its own context.

In contrast, moral behavior sets out rules of conduct which do not allow for the interpretation of context. In moral activity there is a right and a wrong, however ethical belief would suggest that there is only right and wrong within a situation. Teachers who act according to a set of morals often project meaning onto situations which are not actually present. Certain student actions can be interpreted as evil or bad when in fact the students' actions are innocent. Ethical teaching based upon love, would not be so closed minded.

Teaching as a Compassionate Process

When teaching is compassionate it begins by setting up a trusting environment in the classroom. Students are brought to the understanding that each one of them is valued equally. This does not mean that each student is equal but rather it is recognition of the differences in inherent in the student population. Students come to class with different levels of ability, different life experiences, different ages, ethnic backgrounds and different economic backgrounds. Both genders are represented as well as a range of ages and sexual preferences. Recognition of these differences is not a difference in valuing but rather it is an acknowledgment that these differences effect how a student learns and behaves in the classroom. As one of the aspects of compassionate teaching is to make what is being learned relevant, compassionate teachers design their projects to include or respond to these differences. In designing the classroom atmosphere, teachers who understand and value difference will also encourage such valuing in their students. That is to say, teachers will teach more than the subject matter; they will encourage open-mindedness and tolerance of differences. This open-mindedness also applies to the subject being taught.

Teachers who recognize these differences will be more open minded to the causes of certain behaviors in their classrooms. They will understand that a student brings their whole self to the classroom. The student's response to a project in class is more than just a response to that project; it is a response shaped by that student's life experiences. By understanding and getting to know each student as a person, teachers have a better chance of diffusing upsetting or negative behavior and encouraging positive behavior. Acknowledging that the student is in a constant state of change,

and that this evolving identity can be redirected helps the teacher to work with the student rather than against the student. The idea of the non-fixed self allows teachers to prevent themselves from slotting students as good or bad and keeps the teacher open to the possibility of changing or redirecting a student's development. Caring teachers who recognize the non-fixed nature of the self do not easily give up on negatively behaving students.

It must be acknowledged here that some students have had so many negative experiences that it is impossible for the teacher no matter how caring to reach some students. These students have been too severely damaged, either by parents or the educational system, to trust and to open up to the possibility of being cared for. The caring teacher cares for themselves as well as their students. They recognize that there is only so much they can do and they do not allow their inability to reach a student to traumatize of demoralize them. The effort of trying must be enough and it will be recognized by other students as an act of compassion. The teacher will be living what they are teaching even when they might be unsuccessful.

The compassionate teacher allows for and encourages a questioning attitude in their classroom. Such teachers do not simply enculturate their students but rather they encourage their students to challenge traditions so that only those traditions that can with stand the challenge are continued. Reflective teachers then teach their students to be critical and reflective too. This can mean that the teacher themselves will come under their students questioning gaze. Teachers who are compassionate should not fear this but should instead use this process as a way of understanding themselves and what they are doing.

Beyond the Classroom

The responsibility of the compassionate teacher reaches beyond the classroom and beyond the subject matter. Students often need to talk about personal problems with their teachers because of a lack of good family relationships. Caring teachers are there to guide and advise their students in emotional matters when and if the student requests it. Sometimes a teacher must intervene even when not asked if the students mental or physical health is at risk. Unfortunately many students come from non-functioning families and therefore teachers often called upon by the students to become the parental figure. Even in situations where the family relationship is strong, the teacher is thrust into the role of parent because of the amount of time the student and teacher share.

Caring teachers also find that their responsibility is cared beyond the classroom in another way. When students and a teacher develop a rapport based on mutual respect and interconnectiveness there exists a sense of coherency. When students leave the institution they often feel that they have been abandoned. Caring teachers are still there for their students. They are still available to advise them and to help them get started with their new lives. This can mean writing letters of recommendation, finding them jobs, visiting their studios, or helping them with personal and financial problems. Mostly however it usually means just showing a continued interest and expressing that the teacher is still there if needed. Few students need to continue to lean on their instructors once they begin their adult lives but it is comforting and fortifying for them to know that someone is out there for them if it becomes necessary.

There is yet another responsibility for teachers that falls outside the classroom. Teachers who have attempted to instill in their students a compassionate approach to life must also live such a life. Teachers must be that which they wish their students to be. If they have taught their students to love art and to be dedicated to making it, they too must love art and be dedicated to it. Compassionate teaches give generously to others and work towards crating a more loving and a more accepting world. Students will ultimately learn much more from us by the way we are than by what we say. Teaching is a way of life, as is painting, as is being compassionate and caring. These things are not clothes to put on and take off at will, to be authentic they must be part of our being.

The caring teacher is critically reflective. Such teachers recognize their own non-fixed self and it's changing nature. They are always aware of the identity they are constructing and how this identity connects to the world. That is to say that they are always comparing their perceptions with the actualities of their actions. Such teachers use their students, their friends and the direction of their life as mirrors to evaluate how they have constructed themselves and what the consequences of these constructions are. Compassionate teachers are always striving to become more compassionate and more loving. Each new experience is used as a learning experience. New ideas are given time and thought and then are evaluated as to their relevance and meaning. Compassionate teachers take nothing for granted including their own compassion. They understand how easy it is to persuade yourself of the meaning of your actions while being blind to how others are perceiving these actions. The only constant element in a caring teacher's life is compassion, all other beliefs and actions are open to challenge. This means that such teachers are always learning and are shaping themselves in

an aware manner. They are avoiding habitual ways of thinking and acting; habitual again meaning, "without awareness."

The Painter and the Teacher

One of the ways I have been shaped is through my activities as a professional painter. I have learned much about art and about life in my studio. I have learned about the importance of painting knowledge such as skills, philosophies and historical relevance. Painting has also taught me to preserver, not to give up when problems are tough, but to work them through. I have also learned experienced the constant nature of change in the studio. No two paintings are even alike, each painting leads me to new discoveries and new ways of seeing. New paintings give new meaning to older paintings, I see their meaning and significance in a different way. For instance sometimes I do a painting that seems out of synch with the general direction of the work. Later after several paintings and development of a new direction this painting might take on new meaning. It may now seem as a pivotal painting in my career.

The vastness of artistic thought has taught me the value of difference. I can be equally moved by a Carravagio, a Goya or a Gottlieb. The most important thing that I have learned in my studio is how overwhelming joy can heal pain and depression. Joy causes me to return to the studio. Joy and interest, these two elements drive my painting career. By never being sure of what will occur in the studio I am always ready for new experiences, and each experience will teach me something. Each experience is critical, analyzed for its merit or lack of. But it's is the joy of achievement that is the

greatest factor. It is this joy of experiencing of learning of achieving that I try to bring to my classes. It drives the passion to paint.

Because painting is both a private and a public activity, it has also taught me how easy it is to be shaped by the other. For a long time my painting direction was shaped by the forces of the art community. It took me a long time to realize the range of possibilities inherent in the painting process. It was a real revelation for me to realize that I could control and direct my painting career without being unduly influenced by the way in which the establishment had constructed the meaning of painting. Breaking free and finding my own understandings has allowed me to grow and to develop in the ways most meaningful to me. I try to bring this to my students as well. I recognize that my students have to find their own meaning and their own path, I can only advise and question them as to the choices that they make.

Painting has been for me, a positive and vital aspect in the shaping of my identity thus far. It is an influence that I am vividly aware and bring to my teaching. My students have also made me aware of what I have learned and how that has shaped me because I discuss such things with them. However when the shaping is not recognized and when the shaping has been negative it can be disastrous to the teaching process.

When Teachers are Unaware of How They have been Shaped

I have just finished dealing with a situation in which a teacher, seemingly unaware of her own identity, reacted to a situation to such a degree that she put a student's entire academic future in jeopardy. This also threatened this student's personal safety as she was pushing this student

towards suicide. This instructor's response seems to have been governed by an experience unconnected to the student or even the institution, it occurred in another city and another time. Still the experience conditioned the instructor to act in certain ways unconsciously. Her unawareness of her own life view nearly destroyed a young man.

Teachers have to understand the consequences of their actions. It is not enough just to focus on imparting of knowledge. How this knowledge is given is extremely important. Also important however is the tacit information that teachers communicate to their students. Lessons of power and control, of caring and compassion abound in the classroom.

The interconnectiveness of the student teacher relationship has consequences then that go far beyond the classroom. As has been seen in some of the stories of my students, the effect of teacher behavior can remain with a person for life. Teachers have the possibility of doing great good or great harm. It is why this dissertation has tried to stress the notions of awareness. The implication of the power of teaching to affect lives requires that teachers become more aware and develop ethical ways of behaving. It is not enough just to understand the subject matter, it is not enough to act within a code of ethical behavior, teachers need to go far beyond this. In the modern world this is more urgent than ever. Our society is suffering from a lack of ethical guidance not moral guidance. The problem being that, either people seem to want to act out of a total disregard for the welfare of their fellow humans or they wish to impose an unbending, non questionable code which ignores the uniqueness of individual situations. This does not mean that teachers have the right or the responsibility to impose moral or ethical beliefs, but caring teachers will try to foster such feelings and thoughts in their students. Compassionate teachers are moving against

a tide of selfishness and self-centeredness that is sweeping our society. It is imperative that caring teachers help their student to be aware of the consequences of their actions and help their students to understand the interconnectiveness of life. The world will be as we make it.

Teachers often worry that if they spend their time helping each student to reach a personal understanding of their own life process by caring for each student as a whole person that there will not be time left to learn what society, through it's institutions of schooling demands. However my experience has been that the skills, philosophies and historical data that students are required to learn are learned much more thoroughly and successfully when the students feel cared for. When the information is presented in a relevant way and students are allowed to learn and apply it individually, they more readily master it. Students who are allowed to question and thus discover the importance of what they are being taught also commit more readily to the subject matter because they believe in it. Students look forward to attending classes where there is an atmosphere of trust and openness.

The consequences of a teacher's actions go beyond the classroom in other ways that may or may not directly or indirectly affect the students. Because other teachers also meet with the same students, these interactions can be the cause of friction which is usually transmitted to students in some form. Caring teachers are aware of and concerned about the effect of their teaching practices on their colleagues. They are aware of how their colleagues are perceiving their actions, whether or not their colleagues are intimidated, approving or disapproving. This does not necessarily mean however that caring teachers change their practices, they put their colleague's mind at ease.

Colleagues

There is another aspect to teaching which is not directly related to students and that is the relationship between teachers. When teachers agree about the nature of teaching then there is little conflict and little tension, however when philosophies differ, they can be great tension generated. Compassionate teachers are caring towards their colleagues as well as their students. Situations do arise where the caring teacher will have to choose between the welfare of the student and the welfare of a colleague. Like in all other life situations, there is no code to follow that will insure that the choices made are the right choices for that situation. Each event must be evaluated on its own merit and the loving teacher will then attempt to act in such a way as to benefit those involved. However when the teacher chooses the student's welfare over a colleague's, this can cause great consternation and can even threaten the livelihood of the teacher. Because caring teachers recognize that students learn more from action that from words, such teachers may choose to forfeit their jobs to maintain their ethics. Being ethical *does* involve a degree of risk especially if one is a part-time or a sessional teacher. However it is always important to remember the degree to which a hurtful teacher can negatively influence a student for life.

Caring teachers may be accused of undermining other teacher's authority. This usually means that a teacher wants to have power and control over what their students think and do and they feel threatened by teachers who allow their students to have at least some measure of freedom of choice. Teachers who take an interest in their students whole academic career may be accused of meddling in other teachers' classes. Again this usually indicates that such teachers want power and control and are

insecure in their own abilities. Caring teachers should be sensitive to the worries of their colleagues but this should not prevent them from being caring and all encompassing in their teaching. They should take what ever steps possible to insure their colleagues of their intentions, but they should not be dissuaded from giving their students all that they believe to be necessary just to appease another teacher.

There may also be time in which a teacher may have to oppose another teacher because that teacher is blatantly inflicting harm upon a student or a group of students. Confrontations will occur and these may take many forms. Sometimes it's is necessary for the caring teacher to intercede to protect the welfare of their students. I think that some of the stories in this dissertation have demonstrated the possibilities for harm that exist in education. Students are more or less powerless to prevent such harm from occurring to them or their classmates. At such time teachers will be called upon to intervene. At such times it is important for the teacher to have as complete an understanding of the situation as is possible. This means ascertaining teachers and the student's perception of the situation, analyzing the potential for harm to both the students and teacher(s) involved, and then formulating a plan of action.

The education system is supposed to be primarily designed for the benefit of the students. This is often a myth. Education often acts to perpetuate the status quo at the risk of sacrificing a number of students. Education has often in the past and present been used to further the gains of unscrupulous people of are merely protecting a way of life that has given them great benefit while robbing others of even a tolerable life. Compassionate teachers rebel against such forms of education and put the welfare of their students ahead of any forms of determinate socialization.

My Students

This dissertation would not have been possible without the cooperation and forthrightness of my students. They have been the mirror which reflected back to me the multitude of realities occurring in any given event and in the larger event of my life as a teacher. My students have shown me new ways of interpreting actions and events that I had been blind to. They have given me greater awareness of the wholeness of being a teacher. My students have helped me to stop focusing on my needs and to come to the realization of the greatness of their needs. What I have learned is that by attending to the needs of my students I reap a reward of love and commitment from them that satisfies my needs as a teacher and as a person. Great joy is found in helping students to realize their own potentials. They return to you their joy, their love and their dedication to the classroom and to you. In a warm honest relationship with them they can help you to see the path to compassion more clearly as well. They will share in your joys and sorrows and make these experiences more meaningful. They will also share their joys and sorrows and thus bring greater understanding and fullness to you life. By focusing on the needs of the students, it has been my experience that the skills and another academic requirements of the subject are learned better because of the students greater commitment to the course and to the instructor.

It is also true that many students have deep hurts. Many of these students have no one to help them work through these problems and yet in many cases these problems interfere with the student's ability to learn. By taking the time to help students sort out their personal problems, a teacher can often facilitate the ability of that student to learn and to function within

the school system. Helping students, showing students that someone cares, can often make the process of teaching easier, more rewarding and more successful.

Certainly at the post secondary education, when students like and respect a teacher there is no discipline problem. Students behave in class because they choose to not because of their fear of humiliation or retaliation from their teacher or the institution. When students care for their instructor, and the subject matter they will not only behave well in class but will do much to insure that their fellow classmates also behave well. I have found that once I build a rapport with my students, I have only to express dissatisfaction in the mildest of ways and problems seem to disappear.

When students are given choices and have the consequences explained to them they most often react in the most positive of ways. Of course this is dependent upon their respect for the teacher. Part of this respect for the teacher comes with consistency. In other words, teachers who favor certain students and allow them special privileges without obvious extenuating circumstances, lose their students respect and create animosity between themselves and students and among the students themselves. While each situation and each student is different, students are aware of when a teacher is acting justly or not. Students can except that sick or insecure students might need special considerations but they are also aware when a student is being favored because of ideological, philosophical or romantic motivations. Such favoring as these latter ones destroy the bonds of trust in a classroom and facilitate problematic confrontations.

The world will belong to these students. They will shape tomorrow. How tomorrow treats us will in large be determined by how we treat these

young people. Compassionate teachers wish for a compassionate world. They strive to bring it about through their daily actions and interactions. Care and love are learned through expressions of care and love. Someone who has experienced compassion will often wish to give this experience to others, partial in the hope of again being given this gift and partially to experience the joy of giving this gift. Such has been my lesson in compassionate being and I have hoped to share this experience with you. It has not been an easy task for writing has proved to be a difficult task for me.

On the Difficulty of Writing

Before concluding this dissertation, though not the process of change that it reflects, I feel it is necessary to talk a little about the writing of it. This process in-and-of-itself has been a process of awakening and awareness. Before I began this work, I had some vague notion that I was unhappy with the student teacher relationship as it had been defined by my history. I knew also in my mind that students often seemed to be unhappy or unresponsive. I also knew somewhat that they responded to being cared for but I never crystallized my thoughts nor did I think to simply ask my students about their experiences in the educational system. The writing of this dissertation has forced me to become that which I wished to become, that is to say, the revelations I received from my students, from the books and articles I read, from my explorations of Buddhist philosophy and from my own contemplation of my self and my behavior have forever changed the way I understand teaching, painting and life. Accepting the idea of constant change has given me the freedom to grow. Knowing that nothing is

permanent nothing is static, I can wholly embrace change and growth. Being aware that life holds many possibilities and that I can choose which possibilities I bring into being, gives me freedom and confidence. It also brings to me great responsibility because not only do I have the power to shape my own existence but I also have the power and the responsibility of influencing how others' lives are shaped. I cannot help having effect, that is to say, that no matter what I chose to do or not to do will effect my students in some way, therefore it is incumbent upon me to reflect very critically with compassion and love upon what I have done, what I am doing and what I do in the future to bring the greatest joy and fulfillment to my students and to my self. Every decision I make from the choice of projects, the freedom of interpretation of those projects, to the evaluation of those projects will affect my students' life choices. The way in which I interact with them in class, the respect I give to them, the love I show them will ultimately affect them to an even greater degree. How they react in the world is to a great degree determined in the school system. All of this I learned by writing this dissertation. Hopefully the writing of this dissertation will make others aware of the power that is embodied in the entire educational experience.

I also learned a lot about language. I am not a writer and my struggle with the language was immense. Every word carries with it so much hidden meaning. How to reveal my understandings without preaching or prescribing was an extremely difficult problem. It was also difficult to avoid gender issues in the writing of the dissertation. That is to say that it is so easy to slip into those habitual ways of speaking and writing that are inherently understood as gender biased. The writing of this dissertation helped to reinforce the need for constant reflection and for constant evaluation of the meaning of the words implicit and explicit. Writing this

dissertation was then a joy and a struggle. It demonstrated to me the importance of good writing skills and the importance of being allowed to say what I really felt.

The academic requirements of any dissertation seemed to sometimes be at odds with the expression of unique inner truths. The need for verification of and outside support of intuitive conclusions almost at times seemed to negate the significance of the what was being said. As a painter who paints from the heart, and finds justification in the work by the emotional response to it, having to provide academic justifications was difficult since I understood what I was feeling without the need for justification form the broader discourse. My students too felt this when they read the dissertation. It was not the theory or the academic defense of the ideas in the dissertation that touched them, but it was rather the stories and the interpretations of these stories that moved them. I recognize the need for verification and authentication but sometimes it seemed to hinder the flow of thoughts and feelings, and this was difficult for me. It was mostly due to lack of writing experience. In painting I have learned the language of visual art and I understand it so it has become second nature to me. Writing is new, I needed to think about style and structure which sometimes inhibited the creative aspects of the dissertation. This too then was a learning experience from which I have grown. I can now understand more clearly the frustrations of my students when they are in the process of learning the language of art when they would rather be expressing themselves and their feelings. However I have relearned the importance of skills to clarity of expression and I understand better the necessity of finding the appropriate balance between skills and expression. I also have a clearer understanding of how this balance changes according to the intent of the

project. The wrong use of a word can convey meanings not intended. Each word then, must be thought about so that what is being said is what is being heard. But it is also incumbent upon the reading to experience the entire dissertation to understand the parts of it. It is the entire narration that gives meaning to the parts. The order and selectivity of the subject matter and the coherence and interconnectivety of the work depends upon a full reading. This is the very nature of narration and critical understanding.

Finding a Balance

In many ways this the writing of this dissertation paralleled the concepts put forth in the dissertation. As many of those who have read the dissertation pointed out, compassionate teaching takes up much one's time because of the responsibilities which exceed the classroom walls and the designated teaching time. It has always been a challenge to balance my teaching, my painting and my social life to meet the needs of each part but with the addition of the writing of this dissertation and the Buddhist explorations, time has often become a rare commodity. However by using compassion as my guide I was able to find a new balance for myself. It meant that sometimes painting had to be placed at a lower level than other activities, while at other times the needs of my students required that the writing of the dissertation was postponed. My passion for the concepts in this dissertation and the great desire that many of my students expressed for me to write these thoughts down kept me going when the whole process seemed overwhelming. As I have always encouraged my students not to quit when things get tough, I felt also that I had an obligation to set and example for them by seeing this process through. It was my compassion for my

students and myself that kept me at the computer during those tough times, and it was my passionate belief in the ideas presented here that drove me forward. While different parts of my life received different amounts of attention, I never let any be neglected or discarded. I understand more clearly the interconnectiveness of my own identities and their effects on each other.

The Never Ending Process

The dissertation is coming to an end. As a narration it does have a beginning a middle and an end but as part of a life story it continues. During the time it took to write this, I have watched myself change and move to and through many identity formations. Looking back over the past I have become aware of many more identity formations that occurred there. When I first started to teach I was self absorbed, I wanted to be the best teacher possible for me not from my students. I wanted control over how they viewed art and which artistic philosophies they embraced. I arrogantly assumed that I could decide for them what was meaningful and necessary for them to become artists. I will ever be in their debt for showing me the errors of this way of being. I have seen my self absorption move away from myself and towards my students. I am hearing their voices now, something I never did before. I am not so self assured. I know only that nothing is forever and I must continually reevaluate what and how I teach. Each new event is a learning process. It requires new understandings and redefines old beliefs. I have learned that to give, is to receive. I have received much love and respect over the years from my students. I have also received much knowledge about life and about art. Instead of shrinking down into some

perceived but non-existent essence, I am expanding, flowing and changing as the world around me expands flows and changes.

My students, and my art have taught me the power of love, and the energy imbedded in joy. Each day for me is looked forward too. I value my time with my students, I value my time in the studio and I value my time here in this life process.

I have learned to see and to feel the interconnectiveness of my many identities. Each one affects how the other is changing and these various identities come together to make me. But I am more than the sum of my identities because I am also connected to all other beings and to the world around me. The life force flow here. Still I am more than all of this because I chose to be. I am the final arbitrator of my identity shapings and I chose to paint my portrait with joy, compassion and love though I paint it new with every moment of being.

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